Chapter 4. - THE DOCTRINE OF GOD.

A.

The various stages in Owen's formulation of his doctrine of God are clearly distinguishable. First of all he maintains that reason intuitively perceives Him to be a "Simple Being" who can only be described by means of negations; that more than this cannot be known with the aid of reason because an infinite gulf separates the Creator from the creature. We say that He is immortal, infinite, and simple, - all of which are negative epithets - merely in order to express the fact that He is not like ourselves mortal, finite, and composite. (1). His basic conception of God is therefore purely abstract, and to all intents and purposes identical with the philosophical idea of the Absolute. He then identifies this abstraction with God as Creator. In this connection he makes use of the Aristotelian conception of the "First Cause", which was reached by observation and rational deduction from the facts observed. If we move along the line of secondary causes, from the facts of experience, we ultimately reach a Cause beyond which it is futile to try and discover a more ultimate existence, the Noesis Noeseos, who moves all things without being Himself moved, the first Being who ever existed and acted. (2).

Furthermore, since God is the Creator of all things, some knowledge of His being and attributes can be obtained by observing the effects of His work in creating and upholding the universe. The creation witnesses to His power, goodness, wisdom, and all-sufficiency; His providence testifies to His patience and forbearance, His rectitude and justice. But all knowledge of Him that may be obtained through such means, though true and valid so far as it goes, has no saving efficacy:

"It is confessedly .... so weak, low, dark, confused, that none
ever on that account glorified God as they ought, but notwithstanding all their knowledge of God, were indeed 'without God in the world'.(3).

God, therefore, gave further manifestations of Himself through the Scriptures, and especially through the Mediator, Jesus Christ. Salvation can only be obtained by exerting faith in this Revelation, for in Christ alone has the "pardoning mercy" of God been revealed:—

"Let men go to the sun, moon, and stars, to showers of rain and fruitful seasons, and answer truly what by them they learn hereof ... Had not God set forth the Lord Christ, all the angels in heaven and men on earth could not have apprehended that there had been any such thing in the nature of God as this grace of pardoning mercy."(4).

The knowledge of God obtained by deduction from self-evident rational and ethical principles or by observing creation and providence, only becomes spiritually efficacious when it is combined with faith in the Revelation which Christ came to impart.(5).

In contrast to this, John Biddle, who urged that the Bible should be interpreted literally, and that Christian dogma should be freed from the shackles of philosophical concepts and terms, held that according to the Bible God possessed a body which, though invisible to human eyes on account of the glory surrounding it, was perceived by the angels. His corporeal form was similar to that of man, for Adam was originally created in the divine image; His present dwelling-place, according to Biddle, was in Heaven, where He had prepared for Himself a throne of judgment.(6).

Biddle's method was rightly criticised by Owen on the ground that it supplied no principle which would unify the varied contents of Scripture:

"Because the Scripture speaks of the eyes and ears, nostrils and arms of the Lord, and of man being made after His likeness, if anyone shall conclude that He sees, hears, smells, and hath the shape of a man, he must, upon the same reason, conclude that He hath the shape of a lion, of an eagle, and is like a drunken man, because in Scripture He is so compared to them, and so of necessity make a monster of Him, and worship a chimera."(7).

But Biddle and Owen were really confronted with the same difficulty,
- that of deciding how to harmonise various Scriptural passages and 
weld them together so that they should yield a coherent doctrine. 
Both also believed that the Bible supplied the key to the whole 
problem, for wherever a particular Scriptural statement was not 
intended to be understood literally other passages supplied the 
required correction. (8). But when passages of Scripture apparently 
contradicted one another the further question arose: Which should be 
understood literally and which metaphorically? Biddle, though he 
rejected the method of philosophy, believed that the problem could 
be solved by appealing to "right reason". Actually Owen's criteria 
were also of a rational kind, although he never appeared to be quite 
conscious of it.

It is evident that Owen judged the contents of Scripture, when 
he was formulating his doctrine of God, in the light of the principles 
and conclusions which had been reached by rational deduction from 
self-evident truths and from observation of divine activities in 
creation and providence. He employed the arguments and methods of 
Aristotelian philosophy, as developed in Thomism and mediæval 
scholasticism, to decide which were the real properties of Deity 
from among the manifold and apparently contradictory attributes 
which the Scriptures, when literally understood, ascribed to Him. 
Believing that divine Truth was ultimately a coherent whole, he 
gave primacy to those Scriptural passages which, to his mind, 
harmonised with what could be logically deduced from the conception 
of God as a Simple Being and First Cause, and used these in turn to 
expound other portions of the Bible. He thought that this method 
supplied a conclusive deterrent to Socinian anthropomorphism. This 
anthropomorphism, he held, was latent from the beginning in 
Socinianism, but it ultimately revealed its true character in the
anthropopathisms with which the works of Crellius abounded and in
the crude, materialistic notion of the Deity that was presented by
Biddle. (9).

While Owen had correctly perceived that Biddle's method
would never yield a coherent and unified conception of God, there
was also some justification for Biddle's complaint regarding the
undue prominence that was given to philosophical concepts in
traditional theology; and Owen himself was no more successful than
his predecessors in harmonising Scriptural revelation with abstract
philosophical principles. Our author's doctrine was marred by
inconsistencies on account of this. After proclaiming Him to be
inconceivable and indefinable he progressively sought to define Him.
He failed to see that it was impossible to combine the colourless
abstraction, which traditional philosophy conceived God to be,
with the wealth of positive attributes ascribed to the divine
personality in the Scriptures. His identification of God with the
Aristotelian notion of the First Cause was equally untenable,
because it is highly improbable that the Being who moved all
things while He Himself remained eternally immutable could be
the Object of prayer and worship; for, as Tennant remarks, "if
there be an actual world, the Deity of Aristotle should have no
awareness of it, not to say no relations with it." (10). Biddle
had rightly perceived that philosophical conceptions, when used
in this way, tended to introduce alien elements into Christian
theology.

But whatever were the weaknesses of his method, it is
impossible to doubt the genuine Christian quality of his doctrine.
He never allowed subsidiary elements to overshadow the supreme
revelation of God which had been imparted through Christ:
"The whole Scripture", he writes, "is built on this foundation, or proceeds on this supposition - that there is a real representation of the divine nature unto us, which it declares and describes ... All this is done in the person of Christ. He is the complete image and perfect representation of the Divine Being and excellencies. I do not speak of it absolutely, but as God proposeth Himself as the object of our faith, trust, and obedience."(11).

If Owen had made his faith in Christ as the Revealer of God the starting-point of his doctrine he would have eliminated from it the inconsistencies which inevitably characterise all attempts which make the Christian belief in the Incarnation their peak rather than their foundation. He who believes that God's being and character were supremely revealed in Christ can declare that the Ultimate Reality is Christlike, that He who revealed Himself in Christ is the Absolute. So employed the idea of the Absolute may be used in Christian theology. But it is no longer the colourless abstraction that is reached by logical deduction. In Christ God appears as the supreme Subject actively addressing men and revealing Himself to them. "Not rationally can the Absolute be set forth, only dynamically, only in terms of will, judgment, crisis, deed."(12). In the light of that revelation it is possible to decide the relative value of all Scriptural statements concerning the Father, for by faith we know that everything that harmonises with that revelation is true. We also know that He who revealed Himself in the Mediator is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, the One who orders the whole of existence according to His wisdom, holiness, and love. Such a faith is "rational" because it gives the most satisfactory explanation of the meaning of existence.

B.

In contending against Biddle's ascription to God of a material body shaped like that of a human being, Owen frequently referred to the divine infinity, which he affirmed to be one of God's essential attributes. He inherited the term "infinity" from tradition
and evidently employed it without considering its exact connotation. Much confusion and obscurity of thought resulted from its varied use in ancient Greek philosophy, whence it was imported into Christian theology. This confusion is reflected in the works of Aquinas and later Scholasticism, and is rife in Owen's writings. (13).

It was employed in the first place to signify what could not be defined or limited, and as such Owen (like Aquinas) regarded it as a quality that could be deduced from God's simplicity or from the fact that He was the First Cause. In this connection he defined an infinite Being as One that was not limited by other self-subsistent essences. He argued against Biddle that since God was such a Being shape could not be attributed to Him, for every figure possessing shape was specifically defined. (14). But the theological value of the term, when it is used in this way, is questionable, for it is possible to argue that it is both superfluous and misleading. The idea of God as Creator is sufficient to indicate that He is not limited by other self-subsistent essences, and even the idea of creation implies divine self-limitation. Moreover, the word is liable to be understood in a sense that contradicts what divine revelation takes for granted, namely that God has a definite and determinate character.

The term was also used in Mathematics to denote what was limitless in number, time, or space. With reference to this Tennant affirms that "the mathematical idea of infinity applies only where there are magnitudes, or parts correlatable with Numbers" (15), and so, strictly speaking, Owen was debarred from using the term in this sense by his belief in the divine simplicity - the belief that God did not consist of parts. Nevertheless, it is clear that there is a mathematical flavour attached to the argument, that since God
was infinite His essence, powers, and properties were identical with one another.(16). Here he applies to theology the mathematical principle that an infinite whole has a part equal to itself. His argument broke down because the term "infinity", when defined mathematically, is inapplicable to the qualitative attributes of wisdom, knowledge, mercy, and love.

In Greek thought the term also signified that which was perfect or complete, such as an endless line but a definite figure like the circle. So Owen frequently used it as a synonym for perfection. He affirmed, for instance, that Socinus had denied the divine perfection when he asserted that God was a finite Being or that His power was limited(17), and that in Biddle's theology the error had appeared in an even more grotesque form. There can be no valid objection to the term when it is used in a popular sense to signify "perfection", for it may help to produce an attitude of reverence in the worshipper. It at least reminds us that divine qualities are without imaginable limits or that Space-Time has been transcended in the life of God. Infinity, when it is applied to God, does not mean "unending Space" or "unending Time": it rather implies that everything is comprised within the unity of the divine judgment and that nothing can frustrate the divine purpose.

As a rule, however, Owen used the term to denote that which cannot be defined or limited. As such he deemed it to be an "absolute property of the divine nature, for it was included within the very notion of Deity. Divine Omnipresence, he said, was His infinity considered in relation to the universe.(18). God is therefore omnipresent because He is infinite. God cannot dwell in a particular place, as Biddle supposed, since "place" is "any sphere wherein a body may be received and contained". Only a finite person could dwell in a place; but if God were finite He would have been unable
to create the world. The fact that He has given more eminent manifestations of His presence in Heaven than elsewhere does not mean that He is there in any greater degree than in other places. Moreover, divine omnipresence does not mean that God "fills" Space. He is present to all created beings "not by a diffusion of His substance, or mixture with other things, Heaven or earth, but by an inconceivable indistancy of essence to all things." These statements prove that Owen understood the significance of the doctrine of divine omnipresence: that it does not affirm that God is a kind of spiritual ether pervading Time and Space, but rather that to the religious consciousness the wise, holy, loving Father is present at every point of Space and at every moment of Time.

C.

Like all the Calvinists Owen regarded "immutability" as one of the chief divine attributes. He argued that on account of His perfection and self-sufficiency there was no need for God to change, grow, or develop, to learn from experience, or to modify His own activity to meet the demands of changing external circumstances. Hence he ridiculed the Socinian doctrine - that He was subject to passions, and therefore changeable and mutable. He cites many instances of Socinian anthropopathisms in the "Vindiciae Evangelicae"; for example, Crellius' statement - that God is so affected by His passions as to be vigorously borne towards the object of His desire, or He earnestly declines and abhorres that which is not acceptable to Him. Owen believed that such affirmations were nothing less than denials of the divine perfection and all-sufficiency. Since passions invariably stood between the agent and the perfect execution of his act, a perfect Being could not conceivable
It was really a vain and fruitless task to speculate whether or not He had passions, for nothing could stir up passions in Him even if He had them. He could not desire anything, for He possessed all things; He had nothing to fear; for, on account of His omnipotence, His plans could not be frustrated; He did not yearn for future occurrences because He foreknew all things.

"Where no cause of stirring up affections or passions can have place or be admitted, there no affections are to be admitted; for to what end should we suppose that whereof there can be no use to eternity?"(24). "God is always the same....All things that are, make no addition unto God, in change in His state. His blessedness, happiness, self-satisfaction, as well as all other infinite perfections, were absolutely the same before the creation of any thing, whilst there was nothing but Himself, as they are since He hath made all things."(25).

He proceeds to explain that those Scriptural passages which seem to indicate that God is subject to passions do not describe the divine essence itself; they are inserted in the Bible in order to help finite beings to understand certain truths concerning the nature of divine works and dispensations. For instance, when it is stated that He repented because of something that He had done, it merely implies that from a human standpoint He appears to have changed His mind. They cannot really mean that He is liable to change or that His foreknowledge is limited, because all apparent transformations in the divine life occur in complete accordance with the dictates of God's eternal and unchangeable will.(26). Accordingly, when the Bible mentions divine anger, it is not ascribing the emotion of anger to the Deity but merely drawing an analogy between divine punishments and the effects of human anger. It is indicating "the effects of human anger in threatened or inflicted punishments" - effects that are due, not to a passing emotion, but to His eternal and immutable will to punish sin.(27). The divine will and the divine essence are "constant and immutable" - ultimately they are identical. His decrees are the "eternal,
unchangeable purposes of His will concerning the being and
well-being of His creatures." (29). Even His knowledge cannot be
modified or changed, for, even taking the free actions of men into
consideration, nothing occurs independently of Him (30):

"This is necessary from the infinite wisdom, prescience, and
immutability of God - that He is surprised with nothing, that
He is put unto no new counsels, by any events in the works of
creation.... For as we are careful to state the eternal decrees
of God, and the actual operations of His providence, so as that
the liberty of the will of man, as the next cause of all his
moral actions, be not infringed thereby - so ought we to be
careful not to ascribe such a sacrilegious liberty unto the wills
of any creatures, as that God should be surprised, imposed on, or
changed by any of their actings whatever." (31).

In considering the value of such a doctrine, it is interesting to
note Tennant's suggestion, the persistent attempts to prove the
existence of an immutable and unchangeable Being who, as the ground
of all things, remains changeless amidst the flux and flow of which
our experience makes us conscious, may be due to prejudice and
predeliction rather than to logical necessity. But it is clear that
if the divine life is absolutely changeless it must be the most
monotonous of all imaginable existences. Moreover, the doctrine of
divine immutability, when presented by a Calvinist of Owen's
calibre, seems to conflict with man's religious requirements.
Hence, though it contains an important truth, the criticism advanced
by the Socinians against it was not without justification. As the
doctrine affirms, there is a changeless element in the divine
nature, otherwise there would be no assurance that the revelation
once given to men remained valid for all time. But if we go so far
as to say that there can be no change in the life of God, as Owen
did, or that He could in no way be influenced by external circumstan-
ces, the divine-human relation in worship and prayer becomes
artificial and unreal. Some help to solve the problem may perhaps
be obtained by seeking to draw an analogy between the human and the
divine personality. Of man it has been stated that "activity is as much a characteristic of the soul as is permanence and self-identity!" We may be assured that this is true of God in a deeper sense.

Nevertheless, our author perceived much clearer than his Socinian antagonists that the divine character eternally preserves its own permanence and self-identity, that He who revealed Himself in Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and that all the variety of attributes and emotions which the Scriptures ascribe to Him, such as love, mercy, justice, pity, anger, repentance, etc., are in reality simply manifestations of His eternal and immutable determination to win men for Himself.

D.
Owen firmly believed that the divine knowledge was without limits, and he frequently urged in his devotional writings that, unless men believed this, they could not live the Christian life:

"We cannot take one step in a walk before Him unless we remember that always and in all places He is present with us, that the frame of our hearts and our inward thoughts are continually in His view, no less than our outward actions."

Although the Socinians also believed that God possessed complete knowledge of past and present events, they were criticised by him because, in the interests of human freedom and responsibility, they denied that He foreknew contingent events. He held that the Socinian view was incompatible with the divine perfection, immutability, and all-sufficiency, and that "all things in all places, of the ages past and to come, lie at once naked before God."

He proceeds to explain that God knows things which from the human standpoint are entirely unknowable because of His different mode of cognition. He knows things in their "esse intelligibile", so that in His case the act of cognition is not influenced by the time-element. Hence His knowledge differs from that of man in quality as well as in quantity. This is why He is able to
foreknow contingent events. Moreover, those actions which to men appear free are predetermined from the divine standpoint, and what He has predetermined He foreknows. He gave a lucid expression to his opinion on this controversial question in his first published work:

"We call that contingent which, in regard to its next and immediate cause, before it come to pass, may be done or may not be done; as, that a man shall do such a thing tomorrow, or any time hereafter, which he may choose whether ever he will or no. Such things as these are free and changeable, in respect of men, their immediate and second causes; but if we, as we ought to do, look up unto Him who foreseeth and hath ordained the event of them or their omission, they may be said necessarily to come to pass or to be omitted."(36).

God must fulfill the prophecies of Scripture because "the honour and repute of His veracity and truth....depend on the certain accomplishment of what He absolutely foretells"(37); but He could not do this unless He possessed complete foreknowledge.

It is possible to distinguish two kinds of divine knowledge. The first, which is called "necessary knowledge", comprises all things which have "no repugnancy to being", that is, all things which God could produce. Its extent is therefore determined by the divine power. The second is knowledge of all actually existing things, whether past, present, or future. This is knowledge of what He chose to create from the range of possible existences, and so its scope is determined by the divine will.(38). Divine foreknowledge, being based upon the divine predetermination of events, belongs to the latter class. For instance, God had predetermined that Christ's side should be pierced rather than that He should be executed, although from the human standpoint either of these alternatives was possible. Because everything has been thus predetermined by Him, "all things that will be done ... to all eternity, though in their own natures contingent and wrought by agents free in their working, are known to Him from eternity."(39).
The doctrine that God foreknew contingent events was rejected by the Socinians because they deemed it incompatible with their belief in human autonomy. The "Racovian Catechism" makes no statement on the question beyond the bare affirmation that nothing exists with which God is not intimately acquainted; but more positive teaching can be discovered in other Socinian writings. Crellius, for instance, admits that all mechanically determined events are foreknown by God, but he insists that he knows nothing about future contingent events except that their nature is contingent and that some of them will probably occur.(40). Biddle cites Scriptural passages to show that God repents, that He tests men to discover how they will act, that He informed the Israelites that they would not reach the promised land—contrary to what subsequently occurred, that upon occasions He was disappointed, that He gives promises of a hypothetical character, and that He requires men to make their requests known to Him; from these he argues that God does not foreknow all things, for otherwise they would be untrue and meaningless.(41). Socinus also urged that men could not be free agents if God knew how they would act under all circumstances in the future.(42). But all Socinians were prepared to grant that He knew of every event which happened in the past or occurred in the present.

Owen took advantage of this admission by arguing that it was inconsistent with their method of expounding Scripture. To be logically consistent they would have to repudiate either their method of interpreting the Bible or their belief in God's knowledge of past and present events. This was particularly true of Biddle. He ought to have concluded from Gen. xxii. 1-12 that God was even ignorant of the present state of Abraham's heart. The truth is that the Bible occasionally appears to suggest that divine knowledge is imperfect in order to stress other truths; but in relation to
the present subject such passages should invariably be interpreted
with the aid of those sections which unequivocally assert His
omniscience. No one can plausibly deny that the Scriptures
attribute to Him foreknowledge of some contingent events, and so
there can be no difficulty in believing that He foreknows them all.
Our religious consciousness also demands that He should have
absolute foreknowledge, for without it He could not adequately
govern the world, and men would be unable to commit themselves to
His care and protection. (43).

The extent of the divine prescience was much discussed
between the Calvinists and the Arminians in the controversies
of the period, and men's attitude towards the problem was
intimately associated with their views concerning divine
predestination and human freedom. The Arminians thought it possible
to believe in both divine foreknowledge and human autonomy, while
the Socinians denied the former and asserted the latter. Owen
thought that the Socinians were more consistent than the Arminians
because they agreed with the Calvinists that divine foreknowledge
implied divine predetermination, and that belief in the freedom of
the human will meant that the divine prescience was limited. (44).
The Socinians insisted that human ethical endeavour would be
unreal unless men choose between good and evil, and that the choice
of a free agent could be foreknown by no one - not even by God.
On the other hand, Owen upheld the Calvinistic view that God
foreknew all things because they were predetermined by Him, - that
no man could do good except by divine grace nor do evil except by
divine permission.

This is still an unsolved problem. It is possible to agree
with Owen that because God brought the whole of existence into
being His knowledge differs essentially from ours. Hence He may not like ourselves regard events as past, present, or future. Within the created order all things have their own place determined for them, and even the free actions of men, though not determined by preceding occurrences, are determined in so far as they are related to concurrent or subsequent events and circumstances, and so they may now be real to God.(45).

The Socinian view, however, harmonises with our ordinary conviction that man is able to produce something new, which was not contained in the primary collocations, and that he has the power to decide whether and how he will produce it without feeling that he is in any way coerced by God. Owen's doctrine seems to conflict with this, for it is difficult to avoid concluding from his premisses that human actions are the actions of God, or that God is ultimately responsible for what we do. Here again there may be an element of truth in both views. With Owen we may agree that divine knowledge in itself is absolute and complete, or at least that God by nature has the ability to know all things, but that for the sake of human autonomy He chose to limit His prescience, retaining only what was necessary to enable Him to know the general tendencies of human actions. If this view is accepted, however, it must also be granted that the time-element, or at least its ontal equivalent, does in some sense influence the divine act of cognition.

Finally, it should be noted that our author rightly held that Christian belief in divine foreknowledge was an inference from God's functions as the Governor of the universe, and that its scope was determined by what was necessary to make that government possible and effective. He thought that only complete foreknowledge
would prove adequate for this. Religious considerations alone were allowed to influence the formulation of his doctrine, whereas the Socinians gave primacy to ethical demands. But belief in absolute divine omniscience, may in the last resort, may produce harmful results even in the sphere of religion because, as we have seen, it tends to confuse divine and human activity. "It may prove less disastrous for theology and religion to recognise a limitation to the divine omniscience than to identify man's experience with God's."(46).

E.
The most extreme divergence of views between the Puritan divine and his Socinian opponents concerning the doctrine of God centred around the question regarding the relation of divine omnipotence to what Leibnitz called "the eternal verities". The Socinians adhered to the Scotist doctrine, that God's freedom was unlimited, and for that reason denied that He possessed inherent or essential qualities. They maintained that such attributes would restrict the activity of His will, because even He could "never do anything repugnant to those properties which pertain to Him by nature."(47). He is then described as an unrestricted Sovereign, "the Supreme Lord of all things", who administers rewards and punishments according to His own will and desire. Harnack points out that "the idea that God is the absolutely arbitrary One, and that this attribute is the highest that can be asserted of Him, cannot be more strictly formulated than in the sentence (from the "Racovian Catechism"): 'The right, and the supreme power, to decree whatsoever He wills, as concerning all other things, so also concerning us, even in those matters with which no other power has to do, as, for example, our thoughts, hidden as these may be in the innermost recesses of our hearts, to which He can give laws and appoint rewards and penalties according to His own judgment".(48).

He may be described as "just" or "merciful" if such epithets are only used to describe the way in which he seems to human beings to
act. But the affirmation that justice and mercy are among His inherent qualities leads to a mass of contradictions, for, as the "Racovian Catechism" rather naively says, He would then on account of His justice be obliged to punish every sin and to pardon none, whilst His mercy would demand that He should forgive all sins. (49). Justice actually only denotes what He does when punishing sin, and mercy what He does when He has compassion upon sinners. The divine omnipotence is unrestricted, for if He so chooses God may be merciful towards all men, or He may refrain from showing mercy towards any. (50).

The chief Socinian motive for denying that He possessed inherent or essential qualities was to provide an adequate basis for repudiating the orthodox doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction. They contended that this doctrine was false because there was no divine quality which demanded satisfaction before sin could be pardoned. Through the Scriptures, and especially through Christ, God has shown that it is His supreme will and desire to promote the welfare of His creatures.

"Socinianism", writes Cunningham, "represents God as a Being whose moral character is composed exclusively of goodness and mercy, - of a mere desire to promote the happiness of His creatures, and a perfect readiness at once to forgive and to bless all who have transgressed against Him. Thus they virtually exclude from the divine character that immaculate holiness which is represented in Scripture as leading God to hate sin, and that inflexible justice which we are taught to regard as constraining Him to inflict on sinners the punishment which He has threatened, and which they have merited." (51).

Owen's Genevan theology was fundamentally opposed to this line of thought. It is true that certain sections of his writings, if they are considered by themselves, seem to vie with Socinianism in exalting omnipotence to be the chief and most noble of all the divine properties. The following passage is an example of this tendency:
"Eternal power is inseparable from the first notion of the Divine Being...Indeed, to believe the almighty power of God with reference unto ourselves and all our concernments, temporal and eternal, is one of the highest and most noble acts of faith, which includes all others in it." (52).

This is why he has often been unjustly credited with Scotist or Occamist tendencies; but such statements should be interpreted in the light of others, which declare that divine omnipotence is not identical with tyranny or arbitrariness, that God can only act in accordance with His own eternal, immutable, and essential properties, because His "constant and immutable will differs not in any respect from the divine essence itself." (53).

After presenting the usual scholastic classification of divine actions (54), Owen proceeds to show that they are all determined by the divine nature and character. This is true even of those actions which are the results of the eternal divine decree. In their case He had the power of choosing whether or not He would perform them, but after deciding to act He must do so in accordance with His own essential properties. Although He is good by nature, He had the power to choose whether He would communicate that property to others; but after deciding to do so it is His own goodness and nothing else that He must communicate:

"He is good, and He doth good - yea, He doth good because He is good, and for no other reason - not by the necessity of nature, but by the intervention of a free act of His will.... The divine nature is eternally satisfied in and with its own goodness; but it is that principle which is the immediate fountain of all the communications of good unto others, by a free act of the will of God." (55).

Nevertheless, the fact that God can do nothing contrary to His own nature, such as lying or pardoning sins without satisfaction, casts no reproach on His sovereignty, nor does it limit His omnipotence. (56).

Owen was convinced that the criticism which the Socinians had directed against the doctrine of the Atonement could only be
refuted by proving that justice was one of God's essential attributes, and he thought that this was sufficiently proved by the fact that He punished sin. If He were not essentially just, He would not inflict punishment on sinners because the revelation He has given of His grace, love, and compassion shows that it is more agreeable to Him to be merciful than to seek vengeance. (57).

"Vindicatory justice", or "the will to give every man his own or what is due to him" (58), is an aspect of divine justice, and is related to God in the same way as His veracity or omnipotence. (59). The relation between sin and punishment, instead of being based upon an arbitrary divine fiat, as the Socinians taught, is grounded in God's eternal nature (60), and this fact explains why conscience can perceive "an inviolable connection between sin and punishment." (61). Moreover, it is this divine quality that demands satisfaction for sin—a satisfaction that was offered in Christ's Atonement. To suppose that God could forgive sins without such a satisfaction would be to attribute the Saviour's death to divine caprice. Hence Owen makes the following statement concerning vindicatory justice:

"To look upon it as that which God may exercise or forbear, makes His justice not a property of His nature, but a free act of His will; and a will to punish where one might do otherwise without injustice, is rather ill-will than justice." (62).

Mercy is defined by him as "that supreme perfection of the divine nature whereby it is naturally disposed to assist the miserable." (63). He affirms that this is also one of God's essential attributes, otherwise He would not be merciful towards anyone. (63). But there is no such necessity demanding that He should be merciful as there is in connection with the exercise of His justice. God must be just in order to retain His sovereignty over His creatures; but He may choose whether or not He will be merciful, because, when
He demands obedience from His creatures; He only requires from them what rightly belongs to Him. No one can claim, for instance, that He should reward virtue or offer a way of salvation to those who have disregarded His commands. Hence He exercises justice impartially towards all men, but He exercises mercy in accordance with the decree of election. Towards the elect He is full of compassion, but He allows the reprobate to perish in their sinfulness. Although the divine property of mercy is infinite its effects may be limited, and as the doctrine of the Atonement indicates, it is not actually exercised until the demands of divine justice have been satisfied. Only in view of the satisfaction which His justice received through the Saviour's death is God able to show mercy towards the elect for whom Christ died.

Our author rejected all doctrines which affirmed that justice was a product of God's will, because they implied that He could have forgiven sins on grounds other than His Son's death and satisfaction. Some of the most illustrious Protestant theologians of his own day, such as Twisse and Rutherford, came under the lash of his criticism because, through their attitude towards this question, they were playing into the hands of the Socinians.

The Socinians, as we noted, criticised the type of doctrine upheld by Owen because, through its ascription of essential qualities to the Deity, it limited the divine power. This criticism was based upon an erroneous conception of the traditional doctrine. It would be valid only if that doctrine had stated that general truths and laws existed before God and independently of Him, or that He was obliged to conform with some ideal that was above Him. As we shall presently see, this was not the view for which Owen fought. The Socinian doctrine itself was also untenable,
for eternal truths or principles cannot, as they supposed, be created by God in the sense that He could have chosen not to give them existence or to create others in their stead. Lotze has truly remarked that "truths can no more be made than they can exist independent of reality."(71). When God is described as wise, good, just, or merciful, such epithets are used as predicates in analytic propositions to express what "God" implies to our religious consciousness. God is the eternal home of eternal verities and moral principles. When the Socinians conceived of Him as "Absolute Will" they deified a mere abstraction which had no content. We cannot think of God as existing without His attributes, nor can we suppose that He willed at a certain moment that these should become the modes of His activity. Divine omnipotence, like every other kind of power, must express itself in definite ways, and these modes of expression are called divine properties or attributes. The Socinian conception of God as an indeterminate Being reduced Him to the status of non-being.

This is the profound truth for which Owen contended. God is both free and necessitated in His actions. As the Creator and Upholder of the universe He is free from the conditions which govern human ethical development, but He must act in accordance with His righteousness and holiness, His mercy and love. "Volitional self-determination and consistency"(72) govern all His actions. In one sense this means that He is limited, for it implies that He has a nature which distinguishes Him from others with whom He is capable of having relations. Owen truly perceived that the possible is determined by the actual - that what God can do is determined for Him by His own nature and by what He Himself has created.
Owen's doctrine, however, was unfaithful to the Christian message in so far as it tended to conceive of God as the embodiment of the moral law. This tendency is evident in the statement that God had of necessity to exercise His justice in all His dealings with men, whereas there was no such need for Him to be merciful. Thus he taught that God's most Christlike acts were the most arbitrary. There is no need to separate justice and mercy, holiness and love, as the Puritan scholastics ever tended to do in spite of their belief in the divine simplicity. It is His love that causes God to be so indignant with sin, and to desire that men should become morally perfect, for divine love is holy. Owen strove towards this point of view when he said that justice and mercy were in God ultimately identical, because in Christ's satisfaction they were once for all revealed in their united splendour. All the divine attributes are ultimately one, and "the unity in which they cohere is also His creative and redeeming will." (73).

In contrast to the Socinian heresy, Owen proclaimed the truth that the divine omnipotence expressed itself in a definite mode of activity, and that He could not act differently from what He did and does on account of His eternal nature. "His Calvinistic antinomies, for all their crabbed scholasticism, are often fundamentally true and inescapable."
FOOT-NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR (PART TWO).


2. Cf. "Vindiciae Evangelicae". Ibid., etc.


4. "Of Communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" (1657). "Works", II., 82-83.


6. Biddle, "A Scripture Catechism", 4-6, 9-10; "A Brief Scripture-Catechism for Children", 5. No direct parallels to these utterances by Biddle can be discovered in other Socinian writings. The "Racovian Catechism" (pp. 47-48) affirms that we ought not to think of God as One who possesses the shape of a man since all Scriptural passages which appear to suggest that He has a material body should be interpreted figuratively. Owen, however, rightly maintained that anthropomorphic tendencies were more or less latent in Socinianism from the beginning.


10. He cites instances from the works of Socinus to show that the latter believed that God was a finite Being. (Cf. Socinus, "Prelections", Chaps. viii-x and his "Catechism", Chap. xi, part 1). Owen considered that the Socinian teaching concerning the limited nature of God's knowledge was due to their perpetual tendency towards anthropomorphism.


17. Ibid., 96.

18. Ibid., 93.

19. Ibid., 141.

20. Ibid., 90.

21. Ibid., 93.

22. Ibid., 109. Quoted from Crellius, "De Deo et Ejus Attributis", 295.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., 114.


29. "Two Short Catechisms: wherein the Principles of the Doctrine
40. Ibid. Owen here refers to Crellius' "De Deo et Ejus Attributis", which was prefixed to Volkelius' "De Vera Religione." See Ibid., 116, foot-note 3.
42. Referred to by Owen in his "Vindiciae Evangelicae". "Works", XII., 116.
43. Ibid., 137.
44. Ibid., 131.
45. Lotze, "Microcosmus; An Essay concerning Man and His Relation to the World," II., 713.
50. "Racovian Catechism", 25, 32.
51. Cunningham, "Historical Theology", II., 172.
54. The classification referred to is as follows:-
A. Internal divine actions, i.e., actions which operate within the divine essence, e.g., God's love of Himself, the begetting of the Son, etc. They are also called "necessary actions" because, God being what He is, they must occur.
B. External divine actions, which are "free" and are of two kinds: (a) "Absolute free divine actions", which are the products of an eternal divine volition or decree, - a decree being "a free act of His will, which might have been, or not have been." ("God the Saints' Rock" - Sermon preached in 1670. "Works", IX., 252.) God had the power to choose whether or not He would perform those actions which have resulted from His decree; but having decided to perform them He could not change His mind nor decide how they would be executed. The decree demands that they should be performed, and His inherent attributed require that they should be performed in a particular way. "The choice of acting or not acting, and of acting in one particular way or another, is taken away by His immutability and omnipotence." ("A Dissertation on Divine Justice." "Works", X., 510-511). Such actions, however, are
"free" because in performing them He exercises His will and understanding. (b) "Hypothetical free divine actions," which cannot be performed unless certain conditions are first fulfilled. But given the conditions God must act in accordance with His own essential properties. For instance, He could not exert His vindicatory justice unless rational beings and sin exist; but if the conditions are there this divine property must be exercised. Nevertheless, these actions are free because in performing them He exercises His will and understanding: there is always "a cõncomitant liberty in the acts of His will, and a consistent liberty in the acts of His understanding." ("A Dissertation on Divine Justice." "Works", X., 603. Cf. 589-590).

58. Ibid., 601. Cf. 495 (foot-note 2).
59. Owen defined "absolute divine justice" as "the universal rectitude and perfection of the divine nature" (Ibid., 498), or as "a power and promptitude of doing all things in a manner becoming and agreeable to His wisdom, goodness, and right." (Ibid., 503). It belonged to God as one of His essential properties before any object on which it could be exercised ever existed. After the world was created He exercised it in government, and in this connection it is known as "distributive justice!" (Ibid., 504). When He Had to deal with rational and moral creatures such as human beings, He gave further expression to it in the form of "vindicatory justice", whereby He rewards every man according to his deserts.
60. Ibid., 516-517.
61. Ibid., 518.
64. Ibid., 581.
65. Ibid., 552-553.
66. Ibid., 581.
67. Ibid., 500.
68. Ibid., 562, 582.
69. Ibid., 506-507, 560.
70. Twisse (like Augustine) believed that justice was a product of the divine will, and on this point Rutherford agreed with him. But the latter held that mercy was one of His essential properties.
73. Quick, "Doctrines of the Creed", 35.
Chapter 5. - THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

A.

The fact that God has revealed Himself to men, offering them a way of salvation through His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, constitutes the heart of the Christian Gospel; and it was Owen's main concern in his anti-Socinian writings to safeguard this truth, to show that the incarnation was a movement from God towards man and not a movement from man towards God, that the Son of God took our humanity and not that the man Jesus acquired Divinity. His thought centres around the theme that Christ is unique because the fullness of the Godhead substantially inhabits His Person, that His life is continuous with that of the Father since both are in each other "by a divine immanency of persons."(1). Even the angels, though they perform the Father's will, are infinitely removed from the Son, because having been created they are not of the divine essence.(2). He was not created but eternally begotten of the Father, and so an immense gulf separates Him from all creatures.(3) He came into existence by an eternal act of generation within the Godhead - an act which must have been timeless because God is immutable(4) - and then remained within the Godhead as the Father's essential Word or Wisdom, the "Logos endiathetos".(5).

This doctrine, according to Owen, explains why Old Testament statements concerning God are frequently quoted in the New Testament with reference to Christ. It is stated in the New Testament, for instance, that the Israelites tempted Christ in the wilderness, and that Isaiah had seen Christ Himself(6), because those Old Testament passages actually referred to Christ in His pre-existent state.

"The Scripture doth not say in the New Testament of Christ what was said in the Old of God, but evinces those things which were so spoken of God to have been spoken of Christ."(7).

Although such testimonies are not by themselves adequate to refute Arianism, they establish the truth of Christ's pre-existence beyond
all doubt, and so prove the absurdity of the Socinian contention that He had no existence before His birth from the Virgin. (8).

The Socinians established their doctrine upon entirely different premisses. Starting forth from their belief in Christ's real manhood they subjected the traditional Christology of the Church to the severest criticism on the ground that it hid from men the truth that He was a true human being. If "orthodox" theology was right in saying that he was divine by nature He could not have been a human being, for "Divinity" and "Humanity" are essentially incompatible. (9). The doctrine was contrary to "right reason": for if He had taken the whole of the divine essence the Father would have ceased to exist, and He could not have taken a part of it because the divine nature is indivisible and incommunicable. (10). Moreover, the doctrine was incompatible with Scripture, since the texts usually cited in its favour were entirely misunderstood by its advocates.

But the Socinians admitted that He was "divine" in a qualified sense. They point out that in Scripture the word "God" is employed not only to denote the One who has supreme dominion over all things, but also one who has received some degree of "Divinity" from the sovereign God. Christ Himself affirmed that the title was applicable to those who were greatly inferior to the Father, and He evidently intended that He Himself should be called "the Son of God" because He belonged to that class. (11). Because He was inferior to the Father He prayed, acknowledged Another to be His God, and received power from the Father to send the Spirit. (12). He who originally was only a man by degrees became "divine" through the favour bestowed upon Him by the supreme God.

There was a slight divergency of opinion within the Socinian
ranks as to how and when He acquired His divine status. Some of them argued that He ought not to be called "God" until after His resurrection and exaltation, because until then He was not properly endowed with divine attributes, while others believed that the authority and power displayed by Him during His earthly life proved that He deserved the title before He ascended to the Father. But they all agreed that He only became divine in the full sense after He had become immortal through His resurrection, and had received all power in heaven and upon earth through His ascension. His divine Sonship was of an evolutionary character; His birth, His obedience, His miracles, His resurrection and ascension, were various stages in the career of the man Jesus who became "God".

His miraculous birth was significant because it placed Him from the beginning in a class of His own. Schlichtingius, believing that He ought to be called "the Son of God" while He was on earth, asked:

"Is not Christ truly the Son of God for a singular reason, which is not common to anyone else, if He was conceived and begotten of God Himself by the power and efficacy of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin?"

The majority of the Socinians, however, considered that the peculiar circumstances of His birth were insufficient to constitute Him the Son of God. Biddle, for instance, affirmed that He attained that status through the combined effects of His birth, mission, resurrection, and exaltation, and Socinus argued that He could not be the Son of God in the full sense until after His resurrection, since prior to that He was inferior to the Father in power and lacked immortality.

Jesus' mighty works were not indications that He possessed a divine nature but visible signs of God's presence with Him - proofs that He was more divine than other believers. They were actually
performed by the Father through Him.

"He was indeed equal to God in so far as He did the same works with the Father; but ... He was unequal to Him, in so far as He could do nothing of Himself." (18).

His works testified to the close relationship which existed between Him and the Father.

The "Divinity" which Christ possessed did not exclusively belong to Him. It was also bestowed upon believers, whose relationship with the Father, like that of Jesus, was the result of their obedience and dependence. "It appears that God begets otherwise than out of His own essence, since the Scriptures state that believers are begotten of God." (19). Smalcius observed that Christ could be described as God's "adopted Son" because He ultimately became something different from what He originally was. (20).

Socinianism attempted to present Christ as the crown, the highest peak, of a movement on the part of man in the direction of God. Hence the whole tone of its theology was opposed to that of Owen, whose doctrinal system was based on the belief that in Christ there was a personal descent on the part of God into the depths of human existence. Our author was convinced that apart from the belief in Christ's pre-existence the doctrine of the incarnation had no meaning. It would be absurd to say that He "took flesh", that He "was sent" or "came" into the world, unless He existed before the nativity. (21). The Socinians could not distinguish between the "sending" of the Son and the "sending" of the Apostles because, in rejecting this doctrine, they had broken the link which connected eternity with time. That link could only be perceived by faith. Hence they sought to explain away the doctrine of the Kenosis, which states that the eternal Son of God took "the form of man" and "made Himself of no reputation."
In Owen's opinion the traditional doctrine of the Church rightly affirmed that His divine nature was not humiliated when He took our human nature, for even when He resided among men He remained in the "form of God". "He was humbled who was in the form of God, though the form of God was not."(22). His humiliation consisted in the fact that He who by nature was equal with the Father became subordinate to Him as the Mediator, having no will of His own - only the will of Him who sent Him.(23). Nevertheless, "inequality in respect of office is well consistent with equality in respect of nature."(24). Hence His relation with the Father was of a dual character: He was equal with Him as Son but subordinate to Him as Mediator. His Kenosis made it necessary for Him afterwards to be invested with honour and power through the resurrection and ascension, for thereby His inherent glory, though temporarily eclipsed, was manifested so that men might understand that "He that was less than His Father as to the work of mediation, being the Father's servant therein, is equal to Him as His Son, as God to be blessed for ever."(25).

Without any Scriptural support the Sociniens had ascribed His divine Sonship to manifold causes. The truth is - that while the Scriptures state that His divine Sonship was manifested in different ways, they only attribute to it one cause, namely the fact that He was generated from the Father's essence. They proclaim that He was the Son of God before He ever appeared in this world, before His incarnation, mission, resurrection, and exaltation, and so His Sonship could not have been due to these historical events. (26). The Socinian doctrine is strongly reminiscent of the pagan practice of ascribing "divinity" to heroes:

"Such an hero, an Hermes or Mercury, do they make of Jesus Christ, who, for His faithful declaring the will of God, was deified; but in respect of essence and nature, which here is inquired after ....He was, He is, and will be, a mere man to
all eternity, and no more." (27). They actually recognised the
existence of two "Gods": the Father, who is God by nature, and the
Son, who is "God" by "office". (28). It may well be asked:

"whether it be not a diminution of His glory to be called the Son
of God upon any lower account, as by a new addition to Him who
was eternally His only-begotten Son, by virtue of His eternal
generation of His own substance." (29).

To support their theory they misconstrued the main events
associated with Christ's earthly life. They sought, in the first
place, to show that He should be regarded as the "Son of God"
because He was conceived of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the
Virgin - a fact which proves how they failed to realise that the
birth-narratives are really significant because they testify that
He took upon Himself a human nature. The ground of our belief in
His Godhead lies beyond the sphere of history in the eternal
generation of the Son from the essence of the Father. That divine
nature stands in complete contrast to the human nature which He
obtained through His birth. (30).

It was equally misleading on their part to cite the miracles
as evidence of His Divinity. Their argument in this case was self-
contradictory: if it was true, as they supposed, that He performed
miracles "neither in His own name, nor by His own power, nor for
His own glory", then, so far as they were concerned, He was merely
a passive instrument in the hands of the Father, and so it was
irrelevant to use them as evidence for His Divinity. But the
Father worked in Him only in the sense that He performed all things
at the Father's appointment. The Father did not efficiently exert
Himself to perform Christ's works. (31). In virtue of His divine
category the Son was able not only to perform miracles but also to
give others power to perform them by His strength and in His name.
That authority belonged to Him because He and the Father were
essentially one. Though the miracles were not among the causes of His divine Sonship yet they confirm the believer's faith in Him as the Son of God, because

"in the doing of these works, the Father was so with Him as that He was in Him, and He in the Father; not only energetikos, but by that divine indwelling which onenness of nature gives to Father and Son."(32).

Finally, the Socinian statement - that His resurrection and exaltation were the primary causes of His deification - shows that they had failed to perceive the true implication of these events, and that they had ignored the testimony of Scripture that He was the Son before these events occurred. It could not be true that the Son of God died if Christ did not reach that status until after His resurrection.(33). Moreover, the Scriptures would not have stated that He arose from the dead in virtue of His own power if He had not been divine.(34). Hence His resurrection and exaltation were not causes of His divine Sonship, but eminent occasions on which His eternal Lordship was manifested.

The Socinians handicapped themselves from the start in their interpretation of the Person of Christ, by refusing to be guided by ecclesiastical tradition, and by the fact that they were mainly concerned "with bringing out the Scripture doctrine exegetically and with avoiding at the same time too sharp a conflict with reason." Such a method evidently could not express the significance of Christ as He was experienced by believers. Owen supplied what was deficient in Socinianism because his doctrine was formulated under the influence of ecclesiastical tradition, and so it expressed the meaning of the Saviour's Person in a way that corresponded with the postulates and deductions of Christian faith and of the redeemed community in all ages. Believers know that He who redeems them
from the horrors of sin and death, and satisfies their deepest spiritual needs, belongs to the divine side of Reality, that no creature could give a true and absolutely final revelation of the Father, and that a human being could never be the Redeemer because he himself would need redemption. For this reason Christian faith is not satisfied with anyone who is less than God. Christ inspires faith because He and the Father are one. These considerations show that Socinianism failed to explain convincingly why Christ ought to be regarded as God's final revelation of Himself to man, or as the Saviour of the world, because it refused to recognise the qualitative uniqueness of His relationship with the Father. Owen was right when he said that the whole tendency of the Socinian doctrine was to reduce Him to the same level as the great prophets and teachers of all ages. He fought well for the basic truth - that Christ stands on the side of the Creator and not on the side of the creature, that His relation to the Father depends upon a deep primal identity of nature within the Godhead and not upon an acquired moral and spiritual affinity, that He differs from believers because He is the Son by nature, while they become "sons of God" by grace. His uniqueness is clearly expressed by Brunner thus:

"It is impossible to become the Son. He only can be the Son if He is the Son, and in the very nature of the case, in this sense, there can only be one Son."(36)

It is true that the Son, when He became the Mediator between God and man, voluntarily subordinated Himself to the Father; but even then He had authority because He belonged in the state of humiliation to the divine, as well as to the human, realm. In His divine capacity He was above men; in His human capacity He was beneath God. It was the fact that He belonged to both worlds that enabled Him to be the Mediator. That office could not be fulfilled by the Socinian
Christ because He merely belonged to the sphere of humanity.

B. The Socinians, when they denied that Christ existed before His miraculous birth, repudiated the ecclesiastical doctrine of the Son's pre-existence, which, they maintained, was not expressed in the Scriptures. They granted that some Old Testament texts which referred to God were used by New Testament writers with reference to Christ; but they argued that those New Testament quotations should not be regarded as explanations of the original passages. It was possible to use them in a context which related them to Christ because He was God's "distinguished ambassador," who "represented the Father before men and performed all things in His name and by His authority." They do not indicate, as "orthodox" theologians frequently supposed, that He existed before His birth. (37).

It was further argued that since He had no existence before He came into the world He could have had no share in the creation of the material universe. The idea that the world was created by the Son was based on erroneous interpretations of certain sections of the Bible. Those passages which attribute creation to Him refer to the work which He performed as God's instrument in creating the world anew under the Gospel dispensation, for only in connection with this "creation" - the "second creation" - is there any mention of a mediating Agent. (38). Those who belong to this "new creation" not only acknowledge the Father's sovereignty but also recognise the sovereignty of Christ, in whose name and by whose authority this world-transformation occurs. It was possible, however, to interpret these passages as if they referred to the material universe, because in view of the fact that God had created that universe with Christ in view He was in one sense its cause. (39)
After denying Christ's essential Divinity the Socinians proceeded to show that His knowledge was limited in scope. This is not surprising because they had denied that even the Father Himself was omniscient. Some of them, however, were ready to admit that Christ possessed knowledge of all things pertaining to the Church; their argument was - that such knowledge was finite, and that it could therefore be attributed to a finite person. Socinus affirms, for instance, that -

"although the knowledge or cognition of Christ be finite, one may not conclude thence that He does not know all things that are in the Church. For whatever things are performed in the Church are finite, and therefore may be known by a man whose substance and knowledge are finite."(40).

The question concerning Christ's relation to the created universe was approached by Owen from an entirely different angle. He points out that since He was God's eternal Word the Scriptures variously described Him as the principal Agent, and as the Father's instrument, in bringing all things into existence. These statements correspond to His twofold relation to the Father: in the one case He is considered as being of the same essence as the Father, while in the other He is regarded as the Mediator.(41). While it is true that creation should primarily be ascribed to the Father, redemption to the Son, and sanctification to the Holy Spirit, one should beware of holding too limited views concerning the spheres of operation allocated to the various Persons of the Trinity. It is equally true to say that, as the Father takes part in redemption and regeneration, so are the Son and the Spirit principal efficient Agents in creation and providence.(42). The Socinians were obviously wresting Scripture to suit their own purposes when they interpreted all biblical statements which connect Christ with creation as if they referred to the "new creation" effected by Him.
under the Gospel, for the contexts of those passages clearly show that they refer to the creation of the material universe. (43). Their exegesis must be incorrect because it was nowhere stated that "the world to come" was "made". (44). Those passages which proclaim that Christ created all things confirm our belief in His essential Godhead by contrasting Him with all creatures, for -

"He by whom all things, all creatures, were created, is no | creature; for He else must create Himself." (45).

Belief in Christ's omniscience, according to Owen, was the necessary corollary of faith in His essential Divinity, and it was for this reason that the Scriptures declared His knowledge to be infinite. (46). But the knowledge attributed to Him by the Socinians was merely an inference from their idea of Him as the Mediator. They perceived that He could not fulfil His mediatorial duties unless He possessed more knowledge than ordinary human beings, and for this reason Socinus and Grotius even ventured so far as to admit that He knew all things pertaining to the Church. They must have failed to perceive the far-reaching logical implications of such an idea otherwise they would have realised that, if their arguments against believing in the Father's omniscience were valid, it would be impossible to ascribe to Christ complete knowledge concerning the Church. If He knew all things concerning the Church, what prevented Him from knowing all things? This method of "reasoning" can only lead to absurdities. The truth is: that belief in His omniscience and belief in His Godhead are inseparable, for only He who is divine by nature can know all things. (47).

At this point it would be advantageous to summarise the views held respectively by the Socinians and by Dr. Owen concerning Christ's Deity. The former believed that by nature He was a human being who received from the Father the status of
"Divinity" through His birth, His miracles and His perfect obedience, His resurrection and exaltation, whereby He became like God Himself immortal and received supreme authority to judge all men. He was the most beloved of all "the sons of God", for it is evident that -

"He alone was begotten of God through the Holy Spirit, that He alone was sanctified by Him and sent into the world, invested with the office of Christ, that He alone has as yet been raised from the dead by God to an immortal existence, He alone made the heir of all things and the partaker of a heavenly kingdom." (48).

Believers may also become "the sons of God", and receive "Divinity" that differs only in degree from that which the Father conferred upon Christ. Like them Christ became divine through His absolute dependence upon the Father, and His complete obedience to the Father's will. He was not divine by nature. He did not exist before His birth from the Virgin, and so He could neither have been the Creator nor the Sustainer of the material universe. Since He is a finite Person, His knowledge also must be finite. Nevertheless, He was the One whom God chose to be the Creator and the Upholder of the redeemed community, the "new world" that came into being through the Gospel. His knowledge concerning the Church must be complete, for He brought her into being, and He sustains her through His power.

On the other hand, Owen maintained that Christ was God's eternal Word, the only-begotten Son, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, who, in order to become the Mediator between God and man, humiliated Himself by taking human flesh. In His mediatorial capacity He was inferior to the Father, but in essence He remained equal with Him, for the "form of God" could under no circumstances be humiliated. He still possessed all divine attributes, including that of omniscience. He is the Son of God by nature, while
believers (like the angels) are the adopted children of God. Those who receive the status of sonship by faith do so through regeneration and repentance, and through divine grace and favour; but Christ is "the proper, natural, only-begotten Son of God, in contradistinction to all others, the adopted sons of God."(49). He came from "the bosom of the Father", from beyond the realm of creaturely existence: an infinite distance therefore separates Him from all human beings.

"Between that which is finite and that which is infinite, that which is eternal and that which is temporal, the creature and the Creator, God by nature and Him who by nature is not God, it is utterly impossible there should be any equality."(50).

Socinianism is recrudescent heathenism: to suppose that there is continuity between God and the world, that God can delegate His own authority to a creature, that a human being can become divine, is sheer paganism. Christian faith is fundamentally belief in Christ's essential Divinity and eternal Lordship. His miracles, His holy life, His resurrection and exaltation, were manifestations of that glory which actually belonged to Him from eternity.

Owen deserves to be admired for his unflinching defence of the Christian faith against the insidious onslaughts of Socinianism, and especially for his devotion to the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence, which affirms that the life of the Son is continuous with that of the Father, that in Christ God came into the world to save sinners, for it is this doctrine alone which sets forth the real magnitude of the divine love, the wonder of the Incarnation, and the absolute character of the revelation in Christ. He knew that when faith apprehended Christ as the eternal Word, or as the self-revealing activity of the Godhead, it recognised Him simultaneously as the Creator. Faith perceives
that the divine character which expressed itself in creation is the same in essence as the character revealed historically in Christ. Hence it matters little whether we say that the Father created the world or whether we attribute creation to the Son. Owen usually argued that the One who created the world must also be its Redeemer and Sovereign Lord. This argument, however, though it expresses an objective truth, should be logically reversed to show how faith arrives at its conclusions. Camfield truly remarks:

"The sequence of thought in revelation is not that God is the Lord of the world because He is the world's Creator, but vice versa, that God must be thought of as the Creator of the world because He is its Lord. He who stands over the world, bringing it into crisis, judgment, and redemption, is its owner, source, maker." (51).

God is finally known as the Lord, the Judge, and the Redeemer, in Christ, and so it is in Christ also that He is truly known as the Creator.

The other Socinian statement - that God created the world with Christ in view - is unsatisfactory, because that theology cannot show why He created the world in this manner except by appealing to the existence of a supposed arbitrary divine decree. The required explanation is supplied in Owen's theology by the declaration that the Son was always "in" the Father. The latter perceived that the doctrine of creation ought not to be separated from the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence. The salvation of the world through Christ was the motive-power behind creation because the divine nature was eternally Christlike. In that sense the Father did create the world with Christ in view. The perfect love and true mutuality, which characterise the eternal relation of the Father and the Son, constitute the ultimate reality towards which the whole creation moves. "Ultimum in executione est primum in intentione."
The superficial Socinian conception of the kenosis contributed little of any positive value to theology. They supposed that Christ's humiliation consisted merely in the fact that He who once performed mighty works, He who had enjoyed the divine presence in a pre-eminent degree, was subsequently compelled to face the perils and dishonour of death.(52). Owen, on the other hand, faithfully recorded the teaching of the New Testament when he said that the Son had actually surrendered celestial glory to save the world, that in Christ divine love had bridged the gulf between the righteous, holy God, and sinful, fallen humanity. Faith surmises that because the riches of the divine nature could not be fully expressed on the human plane, because attributes such as omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, could not belong to even an ideal human personality, there must have been a real "emptying" on the part of the Son when He came into the world. Christ, we may suppose, only retained as much of His primal glory as He needed to perform His mediatorial work.

The doctrine of the kenosis stands in direct contrast to the teaching of the Socinians - that Christ was originally only a human being who by degrees became divine. But the Socinian movement made some valuable contribution by drawing attention to the fact that Christ was a true man. He did not gradually achieve the status of "Divinity", as they thought; but, as He passed from childhood to maturity, His human nature became a more adequate vehicle for expressing His inherent Divinity. Mackintosh has rightly observed that -

"This plerosis, or development and culmination of the Redeemer's person, is an event or fact which answers spiritually to the great kenosis from which it had begun.... On the privative act of renunciation, lasting on in moral quality throughout the earthly career, there follows the re-ascent of self-discovery."(53).
Believing as we do that behind the "incognito" of His human nature there was what Brunner calls "the mystery of the Son of God" - the innermost divine core of His personality - it is not surprising to discover that events which have no parallels in the lives of other human beings were associated with His historical existence. The real significance of His birth, mission, miracles, resurrection, and exaltation, can only be perceived in the light of faith in Him as the Son of God. Without faith in the Incarnation Christ is reduced to the level of a mere creature. A rationalistic interpretation of His person along Socinian lines must ultimately lead to scepticism. Such a method encourages all attempts to eliminate the unusual and peculiar elements which are contained in the Gospel story in order to reduce them to the level of ordinary human occurrences.

As for the Virgin Birth, it is a well-known fact that the truths concerning Christ's pre-existence and humiliation can be presented without referring to it, as the writings of Paul and John prove. The doctrine of the Virgin Birth at the most is only a corollary of faith in Christ as the incarnate Son of God. But Owen rightly chided the Socinians for citing the record of His birth as evidence of His "Divinity". Owen's interpretation of the birth, as a fact which expressed that He took to Himself a human nature, was in full agreement with the traditional teaching of the Church, and with the fact that it was an anti-docetic motive which originally caused the statement concerning the birth to be inserted in the Apostles' Creed.

When the Socinians urged that the miracles were performed by the Father through Christ, they seem to have been completely unconscious of the fact that such a view conflicted with their own
emphasis upon human autonomy. Owen's criticism was valid also in this connection: unless they were performed by Christ in virtue of His own power they could not be cited as evidence for His Divinity, neither, for that matter, could any legitimate conclusions concerning His Person be drawn from them. The miracles reveal Christ's ability and readiness to succour the needy and the distressed because they were wrought by Him. It is for this reason that they carry with them the conviction that God was personally present in Him. (54).

The whole Socinian doctrine was also liable to criticism because it tended to conceive of the Exalted Christ as being essentially different from the historical Jesus. This was implicit in the statement that Jesus was raised from the human level to the "divine" so that He became God's "adopted Son". Such a view is unsatisfactory because the New Testament picture of the Jesus of history should supply the content of our idea of the Risen Lord. Without the former the latter becomes an inconceivable abstraction.

"The final proof of the Gospel, indeed, lies in the living interrelation and correspondence between the New Testament picture of Christ and our experience of His redeeming energies." (55)

This was why Owen stressed that the Son was the same unchangeable Person while He lived among men "in the form of a servant" as He was before His incarnation and after His exaltation, and that the events of His historical career were signs of the glory which eternally belonged to Him.

But the main weakness of Socinianism - a weakness of which Owen was fully conscious - was due to its refusal to listen to the witness borne by the New Testament to Christ's uniqueness. The Socinian Christ is the 'primus inter pares', the Leader, the noblest product of the human race, but He still stands on the same level as
prophets, apostles, and others who have been "sent" by God. He is not the Son of God, the Redeemer, or the Mediator of the New Testament. The Jewish leaders of the first century saw more clearly than the Socinians that a mere man, however holy his life might be, and however impressive his teaching, could not make the claims which Jesus made without being guilty of impudence and blasphemy. Only by faith can the witness of the New Testament to Christ be understood. Only the believer knows that Christ -

"speaks and acts as God Himself, with divine personal authority, no longer in virtue of a divine commission, but in virtue of His Divine Being, as the Son, to whom the Father has given to have life in Himself"(56).

C.

Owen taught that Jesus Christ was a true man because He possessed a "human nature", that is, a human body and a human soul, which together constitute the essence of humanity. Nevertheless, he carefully indicated that the inmost part of Christ's personality was divine and not human. His human nature subsisted in that which was divine. "The person of the Son of God assumed the human nature into subsistence with itself, and both in that one person are Christ" (57).

The traditional ecclesiastical doctrine of the Two Natures which Owen thus expressed, was regarded by the Socinians as an intellectual fiction, which had done untold harm by veiling the fact that Christ was like ourselves a real human being. He was a true man who was subject to temptations, who grew in moral goodness and purity, whose life is the ideal towards which we should strive, who, like all mortals, was compelled to face death, and whose victory over sin and death infuses new hope into us, because henceforth we know that he who lives a Christlike life will ultimately triumph over all his enemies. The Socinians indicated that all this would be lost if Christ were not a true man. In that case He could not be our ideal, neither would His victories have
any bearing upon human life. When the doctrine of the Two Natures states that the inmost part of Christ's personality is divine, it virtually makes His "obedience" meaningless, and it convinces men that it is futile to try and imitate Him. (58). This doctrine, however, perverts the truth. It must be false, in the last resort, because it contradicts the historical fact of Christ's death. God could not die: since Christ died He must have been a man, a creature. It must be realised that He was a true man before it is possible to view His death and resurrection in their right perspective. Once that truth has been grasped it becomes clear:

"that we also, though we be mortal and die, shall nevertheless, if we follow His footsteps, be in due time raised from the dead, and be brought to a participation of the immortality which He now enjoys." (59).

Indeed, the traditional doctrine, because it attributes substances so opposed as Deity and Humanity to the same Person, ought to be rejected simply because it does not conform with logic and reason. (60).

These arguments convinced Owen that the Socinians had completely misunderstood the doctrine which they sought to criticise. He pointed out that the doctrine affirmed that "Divinity" and "Humanity" were qualities which belonged respectively to Christ's divine and human natures, but it insisted that those qualities were in no way "mixed" together. Each set of properties had its own peculiar sphere of operation. The doctrine itself, therefore, effectively answered the Socinian criticism - that substances so opposed as Divinity and Humanity could not be united in the same Person.

"The Scripture's asserting the humanity of Christ with the concerns thereof, as His birth, life, and death, doth no more thereby deny His Deity, than, by asserting His Deity, with the essential properties thereof, eternity, omniscience, and the like, it denies His humanity."(61).

The divine and human natures, however, belong to the one
Person, Jesus Christ. In Him the two natures are "hypostatically united". "Hypostatical union" is defined by Owen as:

"the union of the divine and human nature in the person of the Son of God, the human nature having no personality nor subsistence of its own." (62).

This made it possible to speak of a "communication of properties", by which is meant the practice of ascribing to His human nature qualities which actually belonged to His divine nature, and vice versa. The Scriptures, for instance, declare that as a man He knew what was in men, He promised to be with His people until the end of the world, and He was addressed by a disciple as His Lord and God, while they assert of Him in His divine capacity that He redeemed the Church with His own blood, that He was made of a woman, that He took flesh, etc. Such statements, however, simply confirm our belief that He is both God and man. They do not deny that the two natures are entirely independent of each other. God is affirmed "to do what is proper to man, and man what is proper alone to God, because He who is both God and man doth both the one and the other."(63).

As a Calvinist, our author believed that Christ was acquainted with two divergent sets of experiences, that He possessed two simultaneous streams of consciousness, which corresponded to His divine and human natures. He prayed, for example, because He was human, though, in virtue of His divine nature, there was no need for Him to pray. "The Godhead prayed not, but He who was God prayed."(64). Likewise, He who was divine was crucified, though, in His divine capacity, He could not die.(65). As a human being He hummed, suffered, and had limited knowledge: as God He possessed all things, was above all pain, and possessed absolute omniscience.
Owen was firm in his conviction that the Socinian Christ could never meet the needs of sinful humanity nor be the Saviour of the world. Their Christ was only a creature, a human being, whose suffering and death could never satisfy the demands of divine justice, whose righteousness could never be reckoned to all believers. He could not quicken those who were dead in their trespasses: He could neither send the Holy Spirit nor be ever present with His people. In vain would men seek refuge in Him, for it is in virtue of His eternal power and Godhead that the Christ of the New Testament is able and willing to help those who are in distress. (66).

In some respects the Socinian presentation of the Saviour's Humanity was more convincing than the ecclesiastical view represented by Owen. They rightly drew attention to the ethical and religious significance of His triumphs as a human being over the temptations and troubles of the world; they pointed to Him as the Ideal towards whom all men should strive; they made valiant efforts to show that His character and teaching should create in others a desire to be like Him. In modern times this type of doctrine has become very popular, especially in those spheres where the influence of the Ritschlian theology has been felt.

"This is what the modern man, so far as his attitude towards Jesus is one of respect and reverence, prizes in Him: this unique, or almost unique, congruence of life and teaching, this perfectly proportioned moral and religious humanity as the most effective way of arousing a similar disposition in others."(67). Christ's life and death are regarded as spiritual stimuli. The Socinians urged that it was the duty of all men to follow the Leader who conquered all His enemies until the reward of "Deity" was conferred upon Him.

Socinianism may therefore be regarded as one of the factors
which prepared the way for the Idealistic interpretation of history.
The element that was common to both Socinianism and Idealism was
the fact that neither movement would attribute any absolute
significance to the Person of Christ. The Socinian Christ as well as
the Christ of Idealism stands on the side of the creature helping
him to become what He Himself is. Indirectly Socinianism may have
made a valuable contribution to theology in that it compelled the
Church to consider anew the significance of the Saviour's Person.
But actually it completely failed to perceive the significance
even of His human nature. This was inevitable because the Socinian
premisses were false. Every believer in Christ is convinced that no
aspect of His Person can be rightly apprehended without faith in
Him as the only-begotten Son of God. However much they value the
fact that He was a true man, however many details they may discover
concerning His historical life, men cannot perceive His human nature
in its true setting so long as they merely regard Him as no more
than a human being. Faith knows that His human nature was the
means whereby God's eternal Son came to man; it was the veil that
hid the personality of the divine Son. The Socinians failed to
realise that it was a veil, and therefore they were unable to
understand its true significance.

Moreover, the Socinian criticism of the traditional dogma
was unfair. They imagined that when the dogma denied that Christ had
a human personality, it really denied that He was a true man. The
admirable distinction drawn by ecclesiastical theology in this
connection was not appreciated by them. The Church, it is true,
asserts that He was a true man even though she denies that He had
a human personality. Thereby she safeguards the reality of His
manhood while she proclaims that the inmost core of His Personality
was divine. The central core of personality in the case of ordinary
human beings is stained by original sin: in Him it was absolutely
pure and undefiled. This was why Owen could assert:

"The subsistence of the human nature in the person of the Son of
God, rendered the least sin utterly impossible unto Him; for all
the moral operations of that nature are the acts of the person
of the Son of God." (68).

This, however, did not (as the Socinians supposed) prevent Him
from giving men an example of a holy life and of perfect obedience.
In His life men can perceive what they can become through grace.
This is explicitly stated by Owen in the following passage:

"One end why God sent His Son to take our nature upon Him, and
to converse in the world therein, was, that He might set us an
example in our own nature, in one who was like unto us in all
things, sin only excepted, of that renovation of His image in
us, of that return unto Him from sin and apostasy, of that
holy obedience which He requireth of us." (69).

He did not become divine: He was divine. Human reason by itself
cannot penetrate beyond the veil of the flesh. Only the believer
can recognise Him as the Logos, the only-begotten Son. He alone
understands that the incarnation transcends the even flow of
history, that Christ's appearance was an absolute and decisive
event, that the divine world here broke into the sphere of human
existence. He stands alone - unique as no one else can be. Through
His coming God made it possible for men to be restored to their
original relationship with Him. In Him alone can we be reconciled
with the Father and redeemed from sin.

There was a distinct tendency in the "orthodox" theology of
Owen's day to try and safeguard the representative character of our
Lord's Humanity by considering it in the abstract, that is, as the
factor that was common to all human beings. Owen, for instance,
asserted that Christ assumed "not any singular person, but our
human nature, into personal union with Himself." (70).
No amount of thought can extract much meaning from such a statement. To regard His human nature along these lines tends to create a gulf between Jesus as a man and all other human beings, for the human nature thereby ascribed to Him is such as no man ever possessed or can possess. It appears that this view became prevalent because men had lost sight of the meaning of the expression "human nature" as it was employed by the early Fathers, to whom it merely implied "the totality of human existence as the possibility of personal life." (71). The Fathers, when they said that Christ was a true man, meant that nothing belonging to man's historical existence was lacking in Him. He possessed a human nature because He was subject to the ordinary conditions of human life. He was diligent in obedience, fervent in prayer, and strong in faith. But those potential human powers, which remain latent in the majority of men, were in Him fully developed.

Christ was a true man: this was why men might be unable to recognise Him as the Son of God. Had it been possible to recognise Him "directly" as the Son of God, faith would have been unnecessary. It is the fact that men may think of Him merely as another human being—another prophet or great religious teacher—which makes faith essential for salvation. This was why Owen adhered to the traditional doctrine that the two natures were not "mixed" together in His Person. If they had been amalgamated all persons who had the privilege of seeing Him in the flesh would have immediately recognised Him as the Son of God. Hence, as Troeltsch remarks,

"in Calvinistic theology, within the doctrine of the Two Natures, a relative independence is assigned to the Human Christ, through which He gains salvation through obedience." (72).

But the further attempt to analyse and explain His historical experiences by ascribing to Him a duplex personality has no Scriptural support. There is no reason to believe that
Owen was right in supposing that a duality of this nature characterised His consciousness - that sometimes He acted as a man, sometimes as God. This theory, which the Calvinists accepted, "affords no explanation of the normality and the coherence of the mind and the life of the historical Christ, or of the lack, in His mentality as a whole, of abruptness in the transitions, backwards and forwards, between experiences suggestive of a divine subject and experiences suggestive of a human subject." (73).

Perhaps all attempts to theorise about the divine-human consciousness of Christ must, in the last resort, prove unsatisfactory, because the human mind here seeks to probe into a realm which lies beyond the bounds of its own experiential knowledge.

At last, however, the day seems to have arrived, when men have ceased to think of "Divinity" and "Humanity" as separate ontological entities which somehow or other were brought together in the Person of Christ. This idea seems to have largely influenced the theology of Dr. Owen and of the Socinians. It is now evident that it is hopelessly inadequate and misleading, because the personality of Jesus as a living whole is lost when He is considered as the result of bringing together two abstractions of this kind. "Divinity" and "Humanity" ought to be regarded as useful terms or categories to interpret the Christ to the believing mind and heart; for the faith which recognises Him as the Word of God, the Revealer, the Saviour of the world, perceives Him also to be a man who knows and sympathises with our human infirmities. Hence He is the eternal Prophet and High Priest of the Christian Church.

D.

At an early stage in the history of Socinianism there were violent controversies within the movement as to whether Christ ought to be addressed in worship and prayer. (Ante, 124–125). The "Nonadorantists", as those who refused to worship Him were
called, argued that God alone should be worshipped, and that, since they were agreed that Christ was not divine by nature, it would be idolatry either to adore Him or to address our prayers to Him. Christian Francken, one of the ablest exponents of this view, states the case for Nonadorantism in the following paragraph:

"Between the Creator and the creature there is the greatest difference, whether you consider nature and essence, or dignity and excellence; therefore there ought to be the greatest difference between the honour of God and of the creature. But the honour that is chiefly due to God is religious worship; therefore, it should not be given to the creature; therefore it should not be given to Christ, whom you acknowledge to be a mere creature." (74).

According to the Nonadorantists, it was unreasonable to worship Christ without believing in His essential Divinity. They even said that there was no real difference between those Socinians who declared that they worshipped Christ as means of approaching the Father, and the Roman Catholics who gave the same excuse for adoring images. (75).

The majority of the Socinians, however, believed that He ought to be worshipped even though He was only a creature; but they were evidently conscious of the difficulty of harmonising such a view with their denial of His Divinity. The "Racovian Catechism", for instance, naively seeks to justify its point of view by claiming that Christ had added to the Decalogue the command that His followers ought to acknowledge Him as One having divine authority over them, that they should honour and trust Him and address Him in prayer. The "Catechism" then indicates that this new commandment does not contradict the previous injunction that God alone should be worshipped, because the Father, when He conferred divine majesty upon Christ, had in this respect made Him one with Himself. God still remained the Ultimate Object of all worship, but under the Gospel it was possible to worship Him.
through Christ. Likewise Socinus affirms that the commands which forbid men to worship anyone besides God "never exclude those who are subordinate to God Himself." This was the basic argument: whatever honour was rendered to God's subordinates was actually rendered to God. But since God had appointed no one besides Christ for this purpose, Christians should only worship God and Christ. To honour and adore others was idolatry such as prevailed in the Roman Catholic practices of honouring and adoring the Virgin and the Saints.

Christ, it was stated, had by word and example shown how to distinguish between Him and the Father in worship. He never claimed that faith in Him should be on a par with faith in God. The Father, as the Supreme Author of all things, was the sole Ultimate Object of all faith and worship; Christ was only an "intermediate object". Hence Socinus explicitly states that:

"religious adoration is twofold; the one, indeed, which without any medium, is directed towards God; the other, assuredly, is offered to God through Christ as a medium: the former adoration is proper to God alone; the latter, indeed, is suitable only to Christ." (80).

The chief reason why He ought to be worshipped, according to the Socinians, is identical with that which they advanced for ascribing to Him the title of "God", namely, because of the honour and authority which the Father had bestowed upon Him. (81). Human beings, however, have many motives for worshipping Him and offering their petitions to Him. To them He is a Saviour who understands their prayers, knows their needs, and searches their hearts. Above all, He has shown His great love towards them by laying down His life. (81). The Scriptures clearly prove that Christians ought to worship Him. Hence those who refuse to do so ought not to be regarded as Christians even though they confess
Christ's Name and adhere to His doctrine. This is the essence of the Gospel-message: that in Christ we have a Mediator who has the same nature as ourselves, who cares for our salvation, and whom we may confidently approach when we lack courage to draw near to the Father. That message is of no value unless He can be worshipped and approached in prayer.

"Worship" is defined by Owen in the following terms:

"By worship, I intend faith, love, trust, subjection of soul, invocation on the name of Christ, - every act of the soul and mind whereby we ascribe infinite divine excellencies unto God."

God alone should be worshipped, says Owen, because He alone possesses the perfections ascribed by the worshipper to the One whom he worships. However high the status of a creature may be, it would be idolatry to worship him. Only one kind of religious worship exists, and its sole ground is the essential Divinity of its Object. Even Christ should not be worshipped unless He is recognised as being divine by nature, and so all Socinians who worship him are guilty of idolatry:

"Those who, denying that nature in Him, do yet pretend to worship Him with divine and religious adoration, do but worship a golden calf of their own setting up; for a Christ who is not over all, God blessed for ever, is not better."

Christ may be worshipped in two ways. As He is one with the Father He ought to be regarded as "the ultimate formal Object of our worship", and as the Mediator He should be considered as the Means through whom the Father is approached.

"As one with the Father, we honour Him, believe in Him, worship Him, as we do the Father; as Mediator, depending on the Father, in subordination to Him, so our faith regards Him, we love Him and hope in Him, as the way, means, and meritorious cause, of our acceptance with the Father."

In His Mediatorship we discover a strong motive for worshipping Him; but if He could be a Mediator without being divine He would not be worthy of our worship. He is worshipped because He is God.
by nature, and not on account of His power and office. Those
divine properties which cause us to worship God are incommunicable:
even God Himself could not bestow them on one of His creatures.
Moreover, divine honour is attributed to Christ because of what
He Himself eternally is; hence He ought not to be worshipped on
account of His supreme judiciary authority or mediatorial functions,
for these are of a temporary character. At some future date Christ
will give up His Kingdom to the Father. As Mediator He is dependent
on the Father; but He is worshipped on account of what He is in
virtue of His sovereign nature. (89).

The Socinians erroneously supposed that there were
different reasons for worshipping the Father and the Son respective­
ly. They worshipped the former because He was God by nature, and
the latter because He possessed delegated judiciary powers. (90).
If Christ ought to be worshipped on account of the power and
authority conferred upon Him, it would be legitimate to worship
angels and men in proportion to the degree of power and authority
that had been conferred upon them. God, however, does not confer
glory upon others so as to make them worthy objects of worship. (91).
The Socinian statement that Christ had added to the Decalogue the
command that He should be worshipped was entirely without foundation.

In reviewing the controversy between the Nonadorantists
and those Socinians who believed that Christ ought to be worshipped,
Owen came to the conclusion that the standpoint adopted by the
former was the only one that was logically tenable. Like Francken
he believed that a creature should not be adored because of the
infinite distance which separated him from the Creator, and that
the Socinian practice of worshipping Christ would open the door to
all kinds of idolatry. (92). Those Scriptural injunctions, which
forbid us to worship other human beings, or to bow the knee in adoration before any of God's servants, were wilfully ignored by the Socinians.(93). Either we must admit, with Francken and the Nonadorantists, that Christ is only a creature who should not be worshipped, or we must acknowledge Him to be divine by nature and so worthy of all honour and adoration. The majority of the Socinians inconsistently sought to have it both ways: they worshipped Him even though they did not believe that He was essentially divine.(94).

"He who is to be worshipped by angels and men with that divine worship which is due to God the Father, and to be prayed unto, called on, believed in, is God by nature, blessed for ever." (95).

Owen deserved the highest praise for His defence of the Christian practice of worshipping Christ, for he expressed the only view that can be acceptable to the Christian believer. Religious faith invariably strives to come into contact with Ultimate Reality, and can be satisfied with nothing less than God. Christians exercise such faith in Christ because in Him they perceive God come forth for their salvation.

"In the fact that the Christian worships a man as the supreme authority, he expresses the absolute and unique mystery that this man is God."(96).

Christ, as Owen perceived, is both the Ultimate Object of religious adoration and the Means through whom the Father may be approached. There can be neither trust in Christ apart from God, nor trust in God apart from Christ. Since the Father was brought near to us in the Son, faith in God and faith in Christ are vitally correlative.
FOOT-NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE (PART TWO)

2. Ibid., 308.
3. Ibid., 286.
4. Ibid., 236.
5. Owen carefully distinguishes between the "Logos endiathetos" (God's essential Word) and the "Logos prophorikos" (His spoken Word). Ibid., 321.
6. Ibid., 280-281.
7. Ibid., 331.
8. Ibid., 215-216, 229.
10. Ibid. 70.
11. Ibid., 27, 34-36.
15. Schlichtingius, "De SS. Trinitate, det Moralibus N.et V. Testamenti praeceptis ... adversus Bethasarem Meisnerum", 160. (Quoted by Owen, "Works", XII., 179.)
16. Biddle, "Scripture Catechism", 29-30. Owen rightly indicated that there was a marked resemblance between such views and those held by the Arminian, Episcopius, who said that Christ was the Son of God for the following reasons: (a) His conception by the Holy Spirit and His birth from the Virgin; (b) His office, "which was imposed upon Him by the special command of the Father that He should be the king of Israel"; (c) His resurrection into immortal life; and (d) His being made "complete heir of His Father's house, and accordingly Lord of all His Father's heavenly goods, and ministers, or angels." Hence Owen described Episcopius as "the great reconciler of the Arminian and Socinian religions." Episcopius, "Institutiones Theologicae in quatuor libros distinctae". "Opera Theologica", I., 335. (Quoted by Owen, "Works", XII., 183.)
17. Socinus, "Responsio ad Libellum Jacobi Wueeki". "Opera Socini", II., 529 ff. Cf. Grotius, who was much influenced by Socinianism. He said: "Jesus is in many ways said to be the Son of God, but most commonly because He was elevated into a Kingdom by God". Grotius, "Operum Theologicorum", Tomi II., Vol. I., 15, and Vol. II., 673. (Quoted by Owen, "Works", XII., 191.) While Owen did not go so far as to say that Grotius was a Socinian - he held that his exposition of John i., 1 could be cited as proof that he still believed in Christ's essential Divinity - he thought that Grotius did not attach much importance to the doctrine, and that his expositions of Scripture were generally designed to weaken the position of those who sought to defend the Gospel against that heresy. (Op. cit., "Works", XII., 9; "A Review of the Annotations of Hugo Grotius in reference unto the Doctrine of the Deity and Satisfaction of Christ" (1656). "Works", XII., 619, 631, 635-637). "Great as he was, he was not big enough to contend with truth". ("An Appendix upon Occasion of a Late Book published by Mr. Joshua Sprigge". "Works", X., 425.)
energy which He possessed from His conception: "Haec signa edebat Jesus per Spiritum illum sanctitatis, id est, vim divinam, per quam ab initio conceptionis sanctificatus fuerat." Annotation on Rom. i., 4. "Opera Theologorum", Tomi II., Vol. II., 673.

19. Jesus' relation to God was compared to that of a diligent scholar who emulated his master: on God's part there was love and favour; on Christ's part absolute submission and trust. "Racovian Catechism", 72-73, 55-56.


22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., 289.

24. Ibid., 214.


26. Ibid., 177.

27. Ibid., 208.

28. Ibid., 47.

29. Ibid., 184.

30. Ibid., 190.

31. Ibid., 171.

32. Ibid., 175.

33. Ibid., 195, 199.

34. He pointed out that Scriptural statements which affirmed that He was raised by the Father and the Spirit were not intended as denials of this: they merely expressed the Christian belief that Father, Son, and Spirit, partook of the same essence. Harnack, "The History of Dogma", VII., 147-148.


37. "Racovian Catechism", 160. Many interesting efforts were made by the Socinians to harmonise Scripture with their own cherished convictions. For instance, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii., 58) was rendered as "Before he becomes Abraham I am He". They said that "Abraham" signified "the father of many nations" but that he did not become such a father until the appearance of Christ, when many nations by faith became his children. Hence Christ informs the Jews that He is the light of the world before Abraham becomes the father of many nations. But if the traditional rendering of this verse was still preferred, its meaning would then be - that Christ's existence, by divine appointment, was pre-arranged before the time of Abraham. The verse, in any case, contained no reference to Christ's pre-existence. (Ibid., 67-69.) Grotius' exposition, as Owen indicates, corresponds with that of the Socinians: "Fuerat ante Abrahamum Jesus Divina constitione". "Opera", Tomi II., Vol. I., 522.(Quoted and criticised by Owen, "Works", XII., 231-236.)

Again, when interpreting John xvii., 5, which states that Christ had glory with the Father before the world was, the Socinians said that its meaning was: that such glory was from eternity destined for Him as it was from eternity destined for believers. (Cf. 2 Tim. i., 9). ("Racovian Catechism", 144-145). Owen retorted that "eichon" in this verse signified "real possession" and not something which Christ was predestined to have. Moreover, it was something that belonged exclusively to Him, and not something He had in common with others. ("Vindiciae Evangelicae", "Works", XII., 245-247).

Owen was right in concluding that the passage referred to Christ's pre-existence; but it is open to debate whether
this was due to the theology of the Gospel or to Jesus' expression of His own self-consciousness.

38. For instance, when expounding John i. 10, the "Racovian Catechism" affirms that "world" signifies either "the human race" or "the future world". Whichever interpretation is accepted a truth is expressed, for Christ renovated, reformed, and restored the human race, and "made" the future world. Paul said that all things were made new (2 Cor. v. 17), though many things had not then been transformed, because he was referring to this new creation under the Gospel.

39. Ibid., 104. The works of Grotius contain many similar statements. Cf. his exposition of Heb. i. 10-12. ("Opera Theologorum", Tomi II., Vol II., 1013). He says that "all things" in 1 Cor. viii. 6, refers to the "new creation". (Ibid., 795). So does Emjedinus ("Explicationes Locorum", 279-280). Owen refers to these - "Works", XII., 267 ff.

The Socinians likewise rejected the view that Christ was the Preserver of the material creation. Discussion of Christ's control over Providence centred around Heb. i. 3. In this verse, the Socinians held that "all things" referred either (a) To the things which belong to Christ's Kingdom, or (b) To the things over which He had authority during His earthly life, when He was "the image of God." ("Racovian Catechism", 108-110). They thought that (b) was the more probable explanation.

40. Socinus, "Disputatio inter F.S. et Christianum Francken de Honore Christi." (Socini Opera", II., 770). It may be gathered from John xvi. 15 that Grotius held the same view. ("Operum Theologicorum", Tomi II., Vol. I., 555). Owen refers to these - "Works", XII., 313-314.


42. Here a profound truth is expressed by Owen; but the type of exegesis on which he bases his conclusions hardly appeals to the modern mind. For instance, he uses the old argument that because the subjects are plural and the verbs singular in both Gen. i. 1 and Eccles. xii. 1, creation must have been the work of "the Three in One". Ibid., 142.

43. Ibid., 267.

44. Ibid., 272.

45. Ibid., 311. He concludes from Heb. i. 3 that Christ is also the providential Ruler of the universe. He maintained that the Socinians had arbitrarily affirmed that He simply governed all things in the Kingdom of Christ. (Cf. Note 39 above). This verse, however, proclaimed that Christ, who by His own power made all things out of nothing, prevented the created universe from returning to its original state. In other words, He is the Upholder of all things, the providential Governor of creation. Hence He is God, for only God could do this.

"That, as the great and wise Creator of all things, He doth also govern, rule, and dispose of the things by Him created, is another evidence of His eternal power and Godhead." Ibid., 278.

46. Peter, for instance, said that He knew all things (John xxi. 17) and Paul proclaimed that "in Him were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge". (Col. ii. 3).

47. Ibid., 313-314.


49. "Vindiciae Evangelicae". "Works", XII., 310.
50. Camfield, "Revelation and the Holy Spirit", 244. Cf. Gaston Fromell's experience of conversion. ("The Psychology of Faith", 35-38). This was the view of the Reformers. Troeltsch indicates how Luther also believed that "even the glory of the Creation through the Logos, the Christian view of Nature, is mediated through meditation on Christ and the Word." ("The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches", II., 831).

51. Phil. ii. 6-8 was the classical New Testament passage on which the ecclesiastical doctrine of the Kenosis was based. In their exposition of it the Socinians claimed that "the form of God" did not denote "the divine nature" because it would be absurd to suppose that God had emptied Himself of the divine nature. "The form of a servant", they maintained, was not His "human nature" but His external condition. The paragraph therefore stated that "Christ who, while in the world, like God, wrought wonderful works; whom, as God, all things obeyed, and who received divine worship, became, when the divine will and the salvation of men required it, like a servant and slave, and like men endured with no divine power." But this was only an external appearance, for even then He was "inwardly and actually full of divine energy." ("Racovian Catechism", 119-121).


53. The question of miracles has been obscured by scholastic speculation since the time of Aquinas. Farmer's treatment of the subject is very illuminating. ("The World and God", 116-117)


56. "Vindiciae Evangelicae." Works", XII., 211.

57. "Racovian Catechism", 45.

58. Ibid., 166.

59. The "Catechism" states that the attempt to discover an analogy to the doctrine of the Two Natures in the fact that one human being possessed a soul and a body breaks down at the crucial point: the doctrine stated that the Divine Nature was "a single intelligible Substance", which could exist as a separate personality, but neither a soul nor a body would separately constitute a person. Hence the analogy had no significance in this connection.(pp. 55-57).


63. Ibid., 327.

64. Ibid., 246.

65. Ibid., 332.


68. "Pneumatologia; or A Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit"(1674) "Works", III., 510.


72. Tennant, "Philosophical Theology", II., 235.

According to the "Racovian Catechism", since God had communicated His glory to the Son, the divine honour ascribed by worshippers to the Son ultimately reverted to the Father. (pp. 155-157). Christ might be honoured by adoratio, invocatio, and the breaking of bread. This, as Harnack remarks, is "established from Holy Scripture, and from the conviction of faith that He is our Lord, who can and will help us". ("History of Dogma", VII., 150, foot-note 3). The Socinian doctrine in this section is well defended. It is interesting to note that Socinus believed that the adoration of Christ was specifically commanded, while the invocation of the Saviour was left to the choice of individuals. Believers might either invoke Him, and so invoke the Father through Him, or they might approach the Father directly without His aid. ("Third Epistle to Matthias Radecius". "Opera Socini", I., 386-388. Quoted by Owen, "Works", XII., 378).

81. Smalcius openly granted this. ("De Divinitate Jesu Christi", 71. Quoted by Owen, "Works", XII., 372). Biddle also stated that both the Father and Christ ought to be honoured in the same way because they possessed "the same judiciary power." ("Scripture Catechism", 59). Likewise the "Racovian Catechism" stated that He should be honoured with divine honour because His government was divine. (p. 193).


83. "Racovian Catechism", 194.

84. "Several Practical Cases of Conscience Resolved". (Published posthumously, 1721). Discourse V. "Works", IX., 373.


88. Ibid., 388-390, 393.

89. Ibid., 391.

90. Ibid., 374.

91. Ibid., 383.

92. Ibid., 394-396.
93. Ibid., 381.
94. Ibid., 391-392.
95. Ibid., 375-376.
Chapter 6. - THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

A.

Traditional theology, according to the Socinians, has mistakenly supposed the Holy Spirit to be a divine Person. The Scriptures ascribe to Him all divine properties, yet they nowhere apply to Him the title "God" because He is the "influence" or "power" or "energy" of God and not a divine Person. Since the name of the Spirit is sometimes placed alongside those of the Father and the Son, many have concluded that because the Father and the Son are Persons He must also be a Person; but to argue thus is as foolish as to contend that human beings are divine because they are mentioned in the same contexts as the Supreme God.(1). At first sight numerous other passages seem to imply that the Spirit acts as a Person, but such statements should be understood metaphorically. Among these are those sayings of Jesus where He seems to speak of Him as "a kind of celestial teacher and master, by whose inspiration and power His doctrine would be promulgated in the world."(2).

In defending the orthodox trinitarian position, Owen pointed out that in view of the clear testimonies of Scripture, the Socinians had no alternative but to grant that divine properties were attributed to the Spirit. Hence they were compelled to adopt the device of denying His personality - to

"conclude that He is 'vis Dei', or 'virtus Dei', or 'efficacia Dei'; - no substance, but a quality, that may be considered either as being in God, and then they say it is the Spirit of God; or as sanctifying and conforming men unto God, and then they say it is the Holy Ghost."(3).

Owen himself, however, believed that the Bible clearly witnessed to the personality of the Spirit. He says that whatever the Socinians may say to the contrary, there is still force in the contention that the Spirit would not be named in conjunction with
the Father and the Son (whom the Socinians themselves recognise
to be persons) unless He Himself were a Person:

"To join a quality with acknowledged persons, and that in such
things and cases as wherein they are proposed under a personal
consideration, is a strange kind of mystery." (4).

He further maintains that the reasons we have for believing
the Father and the Son to be Persons are equally valid in the case
of the Holy Spirit. He possesses all the properties of a Person,
and invariably acts as such. (5). Because He is a divine Person
He has an "understanding" which can search "the deep things of God",
and He is "the author of wisdom and understanding unto others" (6);
He is capable of independent volition, since He gives men
spiritual gifts and chooses who shall be their recipients (7); He
calls men to perform certain duties, and gives them authority and
power for that purpose; and He rules the Church by making the
elders its "overseers" (8). He can be "tempted", resisted, and
grieved, - things which could not occur unless He were a Person. (9).
That He is frequently called "the Spirit of God" or "the Spirit of
Christ" in Scripture does not imply that He is identical with the
Father or the Son, for such phrases are only used to denote that
He "proceeds" or emanates from them. (10). He is distinct from
them as to His Person, and can act independently of them. Because
He is such a Person He is said to be "given": He could not be
given if He were merely "an occasional emanation of the power of
God," for "it must be somewhat that hath a subsistence of its own
that is thus given and received." (11). Furthermore, He could not
have appeared in the shape of a dove on the occasion of Christ's
Baptism unless He were a distinct "substance":

"If He be no such thing, but a mere influential effect of the power of
God, we are not taught right apprehensions of Him but mere mistakes by this appearance, for of such an accident there can be no substantial figure or resemblance made but what is monstrous." (12).
Owen regards Christ's command concerning Baptism (Matt. xxviii., 19) as of particular significance since he thought that the Spirit is here regarded as having a status equal to that of the Father and the Son. The three are regarded as the Objects of our faith, and it is implied that they have equal claims on our obedience. Hence has the same authority over us as the other members of the Trinity. (13).

In the following passage from the "Pneumatologia" our author summarises his main arguments for believing in the Spirit as a Person:

"The Scripture informs us that the Holy Ghost rules in and over the church of God, appointing overseers of it under Him; that He discerns and judgeth all things, that He comforteth them that are faint, strengthens them that are weak, is grieved with them and provoked by them who sin; and that in all these, and in other things of the like nature innumerable, He worketh, ordereth, and disposeth all 'according to the counsel of His own will.' Hereupon it directeth us so to order our conversation towards God that we do not grieve Him nor displease Him, telling us thereon what great things He will do for us: on which we lay the stress of our obedience and salvation. Can any man possibly, that gives credit to the testimony thus proffered in the Scriptures, conceive any otherwise of this Spirit but as of a holy, wise, intelligent Person?" (14).

A different doctrine of the Spirit was presented by Biddle, who sought to revive the ancient "Macedonian" heresy: that He is the first and most distinguished of God's creatures. The Socinians acknowledged that the Spirit was divine but they denied His personality; Biddle believed that He was a Person but rejected His Divinity. The Bible, says Biddle, suggests that He is not infinite or omnipresent when it mentions the "movement" of the Spirit, and when it declares that He was "sent". It states that He is the "gift" of God (15), that He learnt from God and was totally dependent upon Him (16), and that He prayed. It declares that His understanding and will are different from those of the Father, and that while faith in God is essential for salvation one may be a true believer without exerting faith in the Holy Spirit. (17). Hence the Spirit
should be distinguished from God the Father; He is not the Creator but a creature. From this one may justly conclude that He is "the principal minister of God and Christ", who "by reason of his eminency and intimacy with God, is singled out of the other heavenly ministers or angels, and comprised in the Holy Trinity."(18)

In contrast to these affirmations Owen drew attention to those Scriptural statements which emphasise the Spirit's uniqueness, urging that they prove that He does not belong to the same class as the angels or other created beings.(19). The Scriptures attribute all divine properties to Him: eternity, immensity, omnipresence, omniscience (including foreknowledge), omnipotence (including the power of creating), and the capacity to regenerate sinners.(20). They affirm "that He is the author and worker of all sorts of divine operations, requiring immensity, omnipotency, omnisciency, and all other divine excellencies, unto their working and effecting."(21).

Indeed He is called "God", and so He must have a divine nature.(22). Therefore He must be one with the Father and the Son, having the same "understanding, and will, and power" as they have.(23). For this reason also He is worthy of our worship and adoration:

"He is revealed and declared in the Scripture as the Object of our faith, worship, and obedience, on the account and for the reason of those divine excellencies which are the sole reason of our yielding religious worship unto any..." (24).

Biddle's attempt to prove that He is not an infinite Being, and therefore not divine, by citing the statement that He was "sent" was pronounced by Owen to be of no value; for even had he succeeded in proving His finiteness he would be no nearer to disproving His Godhead, because he himself did not believe that even the Father was infinite. Since Biddle had declared that infinity was not a necessary adjunct of Divinity, there was nothing to prevent Biddle's believing the Spirit to be a divine Person even if He were
finite. But apart from this, the renewal of the Church through the coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost does not justify our drawing the conclusion that He must therefore be a finite being. He was not then "sent" in an absolute sense. He had previously been present with the prophets of Israel, and the Saviour had imparted Him to His disciples before His Ascension. At Pentecost, however, there occurred a more abundant revelation of His presence with the Church. The fundamental fact is this: that behind all these historical events is the eternal "procession" of the Spirit from the Father and the Son. The term "procession" in this connection may denote either the original emergence of His personality within the Deity, or His actual coming forth to complete human redemption. (25). He came forth to perform the tasks allotted to Him: nevertheless He remained at the same time within the Deity. This was possible because He was divine.

"As the vital breath of a man hath a continual emanation from him, and yet is never separated utterly from his person or forsaketh him, so doth the Spirit of the Father and the Son proceed from them by a continual divine emanation, still abiding one with them." (26).

On the one hand, He is the gift of God; on the other hand, He is the Giver, the Creator, and the suitable Object of our faith and worship. (27).

Since both sides in this controversy sought to substantiate their views by quoting particular texts of Scripture, the value of their arguments for the modern reader depends to a large extent upon how far their interpretation of those texts harmonises with the results achieved during the intervening years in the sphere of Biblical criticism and exegesis. Although we cannot here enter upon a detailed consideration of those texts, it is now possible to state that there is a consensus of opinion among scholars that the
Bible contains no conclusive evidence which shows that its authors regarded the Holy Spirit as possessing a personality distinct from that of the Father and the Son. The doctrine of the New Testament is more mature than that of the Old; but even the former contains no evidence other than that the early believers were eminently conscious of the Spirit's activity in their midst, and that they identified Him with the Spirit of God or the Spirit of the Risen Lord. Owen's attempt to prove that He was a distinct "Substance", and that He could not on that account be a mere property of the divine nature, by appealing to His appearance in the shape of a dove on the occasion of Christ's Baptism, has no value to-day - partly because the old conception of "Substance" has been abrogated, and partly because the incident is for various reasons regarded as a subjective phenomenon. Paul probably regarded Him as a Person who was capable of self-determination and conscious activity; but there are strong reasons for supposing that he identified Him with God or the Exalted Christ. It would not be out of harmony with the New Testament to regard Him as the unity which makes possible the mutual intercourse of the Father and the Son, - a unity that is indeed actualised in that intercourse. (28). In any case He belongs to the divine order and not to the realm of creaturely existence, and so Owen's criticisms of Biddle's views are valid. The New Testament does not state explicitly that He should be worshipped - an omission that is probably due to lack of any clear apprehension of His nature. To the early believers He was the power of God or the power of Christ within the community; and so the Socinians had good grounds for urging that their doctrine of the Spirit was not incompatible with the teaching of the New Testament.
B. By denying the Son's essential Divinity and the Spirit's personality, the Socinians had prepared the way for their major assault, viz. a direct attack on the doctrine of the Trinity, which for generations had been regarded by Christians as one of the fundamental tenets of their faith. While the trinitarian doctrine asserted that the Deity was comprised of three Persons subsisting in one divine essence, the Socinians held that God was one, and that ecclesiastical Trinitarianism was opposed to Scripture and "right reason".

The doctrine of the Trinity, they maintained, was established by drawing a false distinction between "person" and "essence". Biddle, whose views on this question may be regarded as typical of the Socinian movement in general, defines "a person" as "an intellectual substance complete, and not a mood or subsistence." A person is therefore a distinct essence. Hence the Socinians argued that those who believed the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to be three distinct Persons committed themselves to Tritheism, and their doctrine was a return to Polytheism. (29)

No human being, however, could dedicate himself to the service of more than one God. (30). Trinitarianism was an enemy of the Christian faith: it weakened our belief in the one true God by transferring His glory to others, and it transformed Christ and the Holy Spirit into "idols" and "false gods". (31). The unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, consisted solely in the oneness of their testimony. (32).

Owen, on the other hand, championed the cause of orthodox Trinitarianism, and argued that the doctrine was not incompatible with the Scriptural teaching that only one God exists. The biblical
statement—that God is one—affirms that there is only one divine essence or nature, and that only those who partake of this essence are divine. (33). Revelation has proclaimed that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, are divine in this sense. But though they have the same nature, yet they are distinct persons. (34). They are "divine, distinct, intelligent, voluntary, omnipotent principles of operation and working: which whosoever thinks himself obliged to believe the Scripture must believe." (35).

In the spirit of the so-called "Athanasian Creed" he declares that this revealed truth transcends the capacity of human comprehension:

"By faith closing with this revelation of them, we give up our souls in contemplation and admiration of that we cannot comprehend." (36).

It is above our reason, but since it is not self-contradictory it is not contrary to reason. The Socinians, when they suppose that three infinite Persons cannot be one, are evidently under the impression that their own reason is the measure of all things, forgetting that arguments which are valid when applied to the realm of finite and limited existences have no bearing upon truths which belong to the sphere of the Infinite and the Eternal. (37).

According to Owen, the doctrine of the Trinity is clearly expressed in the following Johannine affirmation: "There are three that bear record in Heaven; and these three are one." Since each one has a Personality distinct from the others they can enter into certain relations with one another; or perhaps we should say that we know that they are distinct because they are related thus to one another:

"They which thus know each other, love each other, delight in each other, must be distinct; and so are they represented unto our faith." (38).

Moreover, the three are somehow "in" one another without the distinction of their Persons being thereby obliterated—a fact
that is usually expressed by the term "mutual circumincession". The Socinians had protested against the use of such terms on the ground that they were non-Scriptural; but they were originally coined to safeguard the truth against the efforts of those who sought to pervert it, and it is still legitimate to use them for this purpose. Nevertheless, all the philosophical distinctions and phrases of the Schoolmen may be discarded without loss if the Biblical message itself is retained. (39).

Owen then proceeds to show that it has been revealed to us how the Persons of the Trinity are related to one another. The Father is the self-subsistent One, the eternal Source of all things; the Son was begotten of the Father and received from Him His Personality; and the Holy Spirit "proceeds" from both the Father and the Son. (40). This "external economy", or ontological relationship, is directly related to the work of salvation, for "they have the same dependence on each other in their operations as they have in their subsistence." (41). The activity of divine Grace in the redemption of sinners presents an impressive illustration of this truth, since -

"the Father doth it by the way of original authority; the Son by the way of communicating from a purchased treasury; the Holy Spirit by the way of immediate efficacy." (42).

The Father is the Fountain of mercy, grace, glory, of the Covenant of Grace and revealed Gospel truths; the Son, who received all things from the Father and was sent by Him, voluntarily condescended to take upon Himself our nature that He might be the Mediator between God and man; and the Spirit, who is sent by both the Father and the Son, condescends to be the Sanctifier and Comforter of the Church and to complete our salvation. (43).

His consistent stress on the need to consider the doctrine
in its relation to human salvation shows that Owen's views were based mainly upon the experimental sources of the New Testament. This is significant in this controversy; for the chief weakness of Socinianism lay in its failure to recognise the religious motives and convictions which led the Church in the first place to formulate the doctrine, and then to regard it as one of the primary articles of her faith. Even the "Racovian Catechism" seems to have perceived that its overthrow would impoverish the Christian religion, for it admits that it is "extremely useful for salvation." (44). Having perceived this weakness in his opponents' position, Owen rightly drew attention to its supreme worth as a valid interpretation of Christian experience. Above all it should be considered in its practical bearing on human life and conduct:

"This revelation is made unto us, not that our minds might be possessed with the notions of it, but that we may know aright how to place our trust in Him, how to obey Him and live unto Him, how to obtain and exercise communion with Him, until we come to the enjoyment of Him." (45).

The Bible, however, does not (as Owen supposed) present the doctrine of the Trinity in its completed form. The more exact distinctions of the Creeds belonged to a later period, and even several of those Scriptural passages on which he largely rested his case must, in the light of modern criticism, be regarded as of doubtful origin. The Baptismal formula (Matt. xxviii., 19), for example, appears to be a late doctrinal expansion, while 2 Cor. xiii 14 and 1 John v., 8 were probably early interpolations. Yet the Early Church recognised that the Father had revealed Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ, and that believers continually experienced the guidance of the Spirit as they tried to live the Christian life in an alien world. This justifies Owen's contention
that the authority of Scripture lies behind the doctrine of the Trinity.

The other Socinian argument - that the doctrine is contrary to reason - was rightly rejected by him as unconvincing. The Socinians had truly remarked that only a monotheist could render God undivided religious allegiance, and that the life of a polytheist or of an idolater was torn by conflicting motives and emotions; but this argument is of no use in this connection unless it can be established that the three Persons of the Trinity are three Gods at cross purposes with one another. The theologians of the past perceived this and sought to safeguard the trinitarian position by distinguishing between "essence" and "person", and then affirming that the three Persons of the Holy Trinity subsisted in the same divine essence. The Socinians were probably right in repudiating this distinction as meaningless, but they were wrong in supposing that the truth contained in the doctrine must on that account be discarded. We may suppose that the divine Personality is something midway between a "person" and "society", and that for this reason the members of the Trinity are capable of what is denied to human beings, that is, of perfect introspection and perfect mutual knowledge. Perhaps this is what is meant by their mutual "inwardness". Such a relationship has no parallel on the human plane, for no man is capable of knowing himself completely, or of fully entering into the life of another self; but the life of God need not be marred by our human limitations. We may therefore imagine that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are one in character, will, and purpose, and that perfect harmony and unity exists between them:
Those forming the highest unity in the hierarchy may possess so much of mutual coinherence, in respect of cognitive and volitional experience, as enables each to be concerned in the activities of the others, and to be transparent to one another."

Since the doctrine of the Trinity is suggested in its embryonic form in the Scriptures, and since it is possible to present it without conflicting with the demands of reason, it may now be remarked that our belief in it is further strengthened by the consideration that certain divine potentialities need objects for themselves. In his famous interpretation of the Johannine saying, "God is love", Augustine urged that God needed a perfect, eternal Object like Himself to know and to love, that such an Object must always have existed within the Deity, and that the world was inadequate for this purpose. Such an Object the Father had in the Son, who was Himself what the Father was, and whose own knowledge and love were without limits. This line of argument is employed also by Owen in the following passage:

"This mutual knowledge and love of Father and Son ... are absolute, infinite, natural, and necessary unto the being and blessedness of God. So the Κυριος αυτος Spirit is the mutual love of the Father and the Son, knowing them as He is known, and 'searching the deep things of God'. And in these mutual, internal, eternal actings of themselves, consists much of the infinite blessedness of the Holy God." (47).

Christian theology has avoided the dangers inherent in Tritheism by emphasising this mutual personal interpenetration that occurs among the members of the Holy Trinity.

We have already referred in this chapter to the opinion that the Holy Spirit has no distinct personality of His own, but that He may be the "bond of union" between the Father and the Son. This view is suggested by the analogy of a community of believers in which many centres of consciousness are grounded in a common will. Thus it is possible that within the Deity there are two centres of consciousness, the Father and the Son, and that these are grounded
in a common will, the Holy Spirit. "The love that binds man to God in the Holy Spirit is none other than the love which binds the Son to the Father in God's eternal being." (48).

Much of Owen's terminology, theological method, and scholastic logic is out of date; but in his own age he succeeded in the task of defending the essential truth contained in the doctrine of the Trinity against the clever and insidious attacks of Socinianism. He understood the doctrine in its relation to the experience of Christian believers, and perceived the tendencies which caused it to be placed in the forefront of the Church's dogmatic system as an expression of the Christian message of redemption. Christianity cannot exist unless the Church is faithful to this message: that the Father is absolutely supreme, that He has revealed Himself in history through His Son, Jesus Christ, and that He is continually purifying believers through His Spirit that He may win them for Himself.
FOOT-NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX (PART TWO).

1. "Racovian Catechism", 37; Cf. 1 Sam. xii., 8; Exod. xiv., 31, etc.
4. Ibid., 402.
6. Ibid., 80.
7. Ibid., 81.
8. Ibid., 86.
11. Ibid., 106.
12. Ibid., 77.
13. Ibid., 73-74; "A Brief Declaration". "Works", II., 403.
16. Ibid., 3-4.
18. Biddle, "Confession of Faith touching the Holy Trinity", 44.
31. Ibid., 45.
32. Ibid., 41.
41. Ibid., 92.
42. "Of Communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" (1657). "Works", II., 16.
46. Termant, "Philosophical Theology", II., 171.
CHAPTER 7. THE PROPHETIC OFFICE OF CHRIST.

A.

In their treatment of Christ's saving work the Socinians so conformed with traditional theology as to accept the current division of the subject into His prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices; but it soon becomes clear that the first was the only office in which they were vitally interested. As a prophet His task was to impart knowledge of God to men, and Harnack has truly remarked that "Socinianism can really gather up everything in the proposition, that Christ has perfectly revealed to us the divine will." (1). They said that the revelation imparted through Him was the "New Covenant", or the perfect divine Law, which was expressed in His teaching, illustrated in His blameless moral life, and confirmed by His death. He was therefore called "the Mediator" of the New Covenant. His prophetic and mediatorial activities were regarded as identical.

But how did He obtain this knowledge of the divine will? Since He was only a human being He could not have obtained it in the natural course of events. It was therefore supposed that at some time or other after His birth He must have ascended into Heaven, where God prepared Him for His prophetic work by allowing Him to behold the glory of that celestial sphere. His task henceforth was to proclaim what He had seen there, and He was inspired in a special manner to deliver His message. Since He enjoyed such extraordinary privileges to learn the divine will, we ought to have every confidence in the validity of His teaching. The Bible frequently draws our attention to this: it affirms that He was, or had been, in Heaven, that He came down from Heaven, that He had seen God, and that He would return to the Father. (2).
CHAPTER 7. THE PROPHETIC OFFICE OF CHRIST.

A.

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Socinus and many of his followers interpreted these texts metaphorically, arguing that if Paul could be caught up as far as the third Heaven before he died (2 Cor. xii., 2), still more would Christ be capable of having such an experience, so that while He was on earth He was also in Heaven "not only in mind and constant thought, but even in order that He might perceive these things as if they were present."(3). The first to suggest that His body ascended into Heaven on this occasion was probably Smalcius, who argued that in this respect the ascension must have corresponded with His final method of departure.(4). He supposed that it occurred when He was in the wilderness after His baptism.

According to the Socinians this was why His teaching ought to be regarded as authoritative and final. His doctrine was divine because He had received it directly from the Father; and this enabled Paul to proclaim that "in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily".(5). Since He possessed complete knowledge of the divine Will, He was called "the Word of God", or "the image of the invisible God". But although they admitted that He perfected the work of the great prophets of the past, the Socinians liked to emphasise His resemblance to the others, - how peculiar circumstances, for instance, had surrounded not only His birth but also that of John the Baptist (6), or how Moses was the mediator of the Old Covenant as He was the mediator of the New. Biddle indicated that Moses, like Jesus, was honoured above all other prophets inasmuch as God spoke to him directly, and allowed him to behold "the similitude of the Lord"; but he granted that "the talking of Moses with God in the person of an Angel bearing the name of God was but a shadow of Christ's talking with God".(7).
To these assertions Owen replies that Christ was not "dignified" with the office of a prophet. After granting that as a man He was instructed by the Father and endowed with wisdom by the Holy Spirit, he contends that He knew the divine will and was able to impart it to others because of His eternal oneness with the Father. No man, however outstanding he might be, was qualified to be the great Prophet of the Church. (8). To have perfect knowledge of God's will "is the privilege of the only-begotten Son,... as one acquainted with all His secret counsels." (9). One cannot learn the truth from Christ without believing Him to be the Son of God. He knew the message because He was in Heaven before the Incarnation (11); and in that pre-existent state His prophetic tasks as truly as He afterwards did during the days of His flesh and after His exaltation. Thus He is "the peculiar fountain of life and light unto the whole Church in all ages." (12). As He now expresses the will of God through His Spirit, His Word, and the ministry which He ordained, so was He also imparting divine revelation to men through similar channels in His pre-existent state. Nevertheless, the revelation which He imparted before He took upon Himself human flesh was not so complete as what He afterwards revealed through His personal ministry on earth, for it was His intention to present "the knowledge of the mind of God in different degrees and measures." (13).

There was accordingly no need for Him to ascend into Heaven after His Incarnation to obtain further knowledge of the Father's will, and there is no Scriptural evidence that He ever did so. He did not obtain divine knowledge by "a fictitious rapture of His human nature." (14). The Socinians were forced to imagine that something of this nature occurred, and so to
misinterpret Scripture, because they disbelieved in His eternal Godhead. Such an event, in any case, would not have occurred after His baptism, since it was on that occasion that He was inaugurated into His prophetic office. (15). Moreover, it was absurd to suppose that His body had been transported into Heaven, since the conditions which made such an Ascension possible had not then been fulfilled. (16). Our belief in the truth and finality of the revelation in Him is not based upon such fictitious hypotheses, but upon faith in His divine Sonship, and its reliability is confirmed by all His divine attributes:

"His infinite wisdom, His infinite goodness, His essential veracity, His sovereign authority over all, give the highest assurance whereof a created understanding is capable, that nothing is detained from us - that there is no possibility of error or mistake in what is declared unto us, nor any pretence left of declining obedience unto the commands of the truth that we do receive." (17).

Since He is God's only-begotten Son there is no justification for attempting to discover resemblances between Him and other prophets. God spoke with Moses on more familiar terms than He did with others (Exod. xxxiii., 11), but this cannot be compared with the relationship that exists between the Father and the Son. Unlike Moses, Christ possesses the same nature as the Father. He alone was therefore able to see God: even Moses was never granted that privilege. (18). Moreover, since Moses was merely the messenger of God, comparison between him and Christ would suggest that the Saviour has only one office, that of a Prophet, so that important aspects of His mediatory work would be left out of account. (19).

This was done by the Socinians when they identified His prophetic and mediatory activities. Biddle's views on this question are not clear because he does not define "mediation"; but they seem to differ from those of other Socinians because he probably regarded His prophetic and mediatory work as distinct. (20).
To regard them as distinct or as identical, however, is equally misleading, since His prophetic work formed only a part of His mediation. On the one hand, all His prophetic acts are acts of mediation, although the converse is not true; on the other hand, He is not "a Mediator and a Prophet, but He who is the Mediator is the High Priest and Prophet of His Church."(21).  

Owen's conception of Christ's prophetic office, as contrasted with that of Socinianism, is in harmony with the best Christian thought on the subject. The view of some Socinians, that His body was transported into Heaven, obviously cannot be accepted without its medieval cosmological background; while to suppose that He obtained His knowledge by means of some extraordinary vision, though less objectionable, cannot be regarded as a satisfactory explanation of the incomparable worth of His teaching and character, or of the power which He imparts to His followers to obey the divine will. As Owen insisted, the only satisfactory reason for accepting the revelation in Him as authoritative and final is our faith in Him as the Son of God in whom the Father was personally present. Ultimately He is the Prophet of the Church because His life is continuous with that of the Father: and this implies that He holds this office eternally. He revealed the divine will to men before His incarnation, and He continues to do this after His exaltation, being as much of a Prophet in His status exaltationis as He was in His status exinanitionis. Owen therefore rightly spoke of "His continued and present teaching of the Church by His Word and Spirit."(22). "The Church", he declares, "was never without a Prophet....Nor can be so unto the consummation of all things." (23).
The Socinians thought of the Old and New Covenants as two legal systems, the former mediated by Moses and the latter by Christ. It was supposed that with the appearance of the New Covenant many Old Covenant laws were annulled; that, for instance, the ancient national and ritualistic precepts were cast aside either because their scope was too limited, or because they had already fulfilled their purpose. But those Mosaic precepts which were retained were supplemented by additional commands, among which were those referring to prayer, baptism, and the breaking of bread. The New Covenant also revealed several divine promises for the first time: pre-eminent among these were those which offered the reward of eternal life and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Socinianism here is very remote from the Pauline-Lutheran-Calvinistic tradition, mainly because it makes no attempt to relate the precepts of the New Testament directly with faith in Christ. We are told to obey them merely because they are commanded in the Bible. Socinianism "was ready to believe and do what was prescribed." (25)

There is little religious value in the Socinian conception of "eternal life", which is described as an endless existence, "the most replete with joy and pleasure wholly divine, passed in Heaven with God and Christ and the Holy Angels." (26). They possessed no insight into the meaning of the Scriptural teaching, that it consists in such communion with God in Christ that it is possible to have a foretaste of it in this present world. They also regarded the promise of eternal life as including forgiveness of sins, which therefore was considered as the result of the Christian life and not its condition. Harnack has shown that in this respect Socinianism and Ancient Christianity (as represented by the Apologists) have much in common. (27). Forgiveness occupies
a subordinate position in the Socinian scheme of salvation.

The New Covenant, they say, also promises that God will bestow His Spirit upon those who believe in Him. Throughout the whole history of the Church the Spirit has been experienced as

"a divine inspiration of that kind whereby our minds are filled with a more enlarged knowledge of divine things, or with a more certain hope of eternal life; also with joy in, and a certain foretaste of, future happiness, or with an extraordinary divine glory and piety."

In this way are the promises of the Gospel sealed in our hearts. But though they retained the primitive Christian thought, that reception of the Spirit precedes eternal life, its value was largely destroyed by their contention that only believers could be thus inspired. (28).

Finally, they declared that Christ ratified the New Covenant by His own perfect life, His great and innumerable miracles, and especially by His death. He lived according to its precepts, relied upon its promises, and adhered steadfastly to His convictions even though this fidelity ultimately led to His crucifixion. Thus the Covenant was sealed with the blood of the Mediator Himself. (29).

It would be no exaggeration to say that the Covenant-idea occupied a central position in Owen's theology. The scheme, which was based on the conception of "two Covenants with parallel ordinances, of Works in Adam, of Grace in Christ", was not devised by Owen. Perhaps it may be traced to Bullinger; it was certainly "taught on Biblical authority by Rollock in Scotland, by Cartwright in England, by Olevianus in Germany, and by Cocceius in Holland." (30).

Owen taught that the Old Covenant, or the Covenant of Works, was an agreement which God made with our first parents before the Fall, and that it consisted of divine laws or precepts to which man was expected to give full obedience. If man obeyed its
demands - and then he was able to do so - his moral achievements justified him before God, whilst disobedience entailed a corresponding punishment. (31). This system, which demanded absolute obedience to all its precepts, was more fully expressed in the law of Moses (32), but Christ Himself made no additions to it. The Mosaic law and the Sermon on the Mount were forms of the Law of Nature, which was perfect from its inception because God was its Author; and so there was no need to exchange it for another, or to formulate a better Law. It still remains in force, and regulates the conduct of the elect in the state of grace. Hence Christ said that "a tittle of it shall not pass away, and he that keeps it shall be called great, or be of great esteem, in the Kingdom of Heaven" (33). This proved the absurdity of the Socinian doctrine, that in His mediatorial capacity Christ gave men a new Law instead of the one that had been revealed through Moses.

After the Fall men were unable to be justified by their own efforts to obey the Law because, on account of their own sinfulness, their obedience at its best was imperfect. The problem could not be solved by exchanging one Law for another, so that it cannot be imagined that "our Saviour hath so dealt with the Law...so that to yield obedience to it now, as mended, perfected, and reformed must needs be sufficient for our justification." (34). God's purpose in giving us the New Covenant was to make it possible for us to obtain salvation by revealing a new basis upon which we might be justified, and He did this by giving us strength and power to obey His demands. That power comes to us through the promises of the New Covenant. (35). Owen defines the nature of this Covenant in the following paragraph, where it is contrasted with the Covenant of Works:-

"First, it is of grace, which wholly excludes works; that is,
so of grace, that our own works are not the means of justification before God;...Secondly, it hath a Mediator and Surety; which is built alone on this supposition, that what we cannot do in ourselves which was originally required of us, and what the law of the first covenant cannot enable us to perform, that should be performed for us by our Mediator and Surety."(36).

The Author of this Covenant was the Father and not Christ, as the Socinians had asserted. Christ was Himself a part of it. It comprises the whole scheme of salvation - everything that has ever been revealed, or ever will be revealed, concerning the divine nature and purpose(37). But its distinctive note was the offer of forgiveness through faith in Christ. Whereas no provision for this had been made in the Old Covenant, forgiveness is the "very life" of the Covenant of Grace.(38).

The Covenant did not come into existence during Christ's earthly life as the Socinians supposed; on the contrary, it operated from the moment that God gave His first promise to Adam after sin had entered into the world.(39). Its administration, however, was more obscure than than after the Incarnation. Abraham received it in a more copious form than his predecessors(40), and after his time it was restricted to his offspring, its outward sign being the circumcision(41). The Jews therefore lived under the Covenant of Grace and not under the Covenant of Works: they could see the Mediator in the future by faith, and they depended on the divine promises for their salvation:

"The Church of old had the promises of Christ, were justified by faith,...obtained mercy for their sins, and were justified in the Lord,...had the Spirit for conversion, regeneration, and sanctification, expected and obtained salvation by Jesus Christ; - things as remote from the Covenant of Works as the East is from the West." (42).

In the Person of the Incarnate Saviour the Covenant was manifested in all its splendour, so that those who lived after Christ appeared in the flesh have received greater advantages than their
spiritual forefathers. (43).

The Covenant of Grace consists of divine promises and divine precepts. By relying on the promises men is able to obey its commands (44). All the promises, however, are inherent in the assurance which God gave Adam after the Fall, so that the Socinians had no valid grounds for saying that some promises were revealed for the first time through the historical Christ. Two types of promises may be distinguished, viz. those which refer to man's final end, and those which assure him that he will receive the means which will enable him to achieve that end. The former are always conditional, while the latter are "absolute".

The chief promise which belongs to the former class is that of eternal life. Owen's conception of "eternal life", it should be noted, is from a religious point of view immeasurably superior to that of the Socinians. He rightly considered it as being essentially a life of communion with God; it was a quality of life which could be enjoyed to a certain extent even here. He says that for believers

"Heaven or blessedness is nothing but the full enjoyment of what we are here to love and delight in above all, of that which is the object of our affections as spiritually renewed." (45).

It includes immortality, for this quality of life survives death. It was not unknown to Job, David, the patriarchs, and all those who in Old Testament times relied on the promises of the New Covenant; even the idea of immortality was expressed in the Old Testament, for it asserts that Enoch and Elijah did not taste death. All the Jews relied upon the promise of eternal life because they lived under the Covenant which God made with Abraham. (46).

Those "absolute" promises which refer to the means of salvation are addressed solely to the elect or "the children of the
Covenant. Thereby God guarantees that they will receive those spiritual blessings which will enable them to partake of the ultimate blessings of the Covenant of Grace. These include forgiveness, working faith, power to obey and to persevere, etc. (47)

Above all they are promised the Holy Spirit, who enables them to partake of these privileges - to believe in Christ, to be delivered from bondage, justified, and sanctified, to receive the gift of adoption, and to be supplied with new grace, joy, consolation, and peace. Since it is the Spirit that enables us to believe in Christ, the Socinians had gone far astray when they said that only believers could receive Him (48). As a Prophet Christ not only imparts instruction concerning the divine will, He also illuminates our minds and hearts. "None... could be the Prophet of the Church, but He who had the power to send the Holy Spirit to enable it to receive His doctrine by the saving illumination of the minds of men!" (49).

The New Covenant, however, did not annul the Law, which still retains its central position. Owen considers it to be essential as a stimulus to repentance, since it is through the Law that sin is known (50). It is the pre-supposition of faith and of the Covenant of Grace, for without it we can really appreciate the value of the Gospel (51). It makes known to us the divine Nature and Will by expressing the "authority", "holiness", and "truth" of God (52). Its demands upon us are therefore as urgent and categorical as they were upon the Jews before the Incarnation. God has not lowered the ethical standard for believers. Under the New Covenant also He demands from men the same standard of perfection as He required by the Law of Nature. Yet by revealing to men his own impotence to obey its precepts, the Law causes him to lean on the promises of the New Covenant, and
especially upon Christ's redemptive work, whereby "believers are freed from the instituted law of ordinances, which...was a yoke which neither we nor our fathers (in the faith) could bear."(53).

It leads us to Christ by "making us long and seek for a Saviour."(54)

While it cannot in itself be a basis for salvation, because it demands a standard of subjective achievement which no man can realise, yet it still remains as the rule of life in the state of grace. But henceforth the idea of merit has been set aside, and salvation is attained through divine grace, whereby human personality is so transformed and united with God that doing the divine will becomes a matter of constant joy. Those believers who sincerely endeavour to obey the divine precepts, but fail to achieve perfection, receive forgiveness of sins, and they are justified before God because the righteousness of the Mediator is accounted to their credit.

"Although God in them (i.e., the demands of the Covenant) requireth universal holiness of us, yet He doth not do it in that strict and rigorous way as by the Law....But He doth it with a contemplation of grace and mercy, so as that if there be a universal sincerity, in a respect unto all His commands, He both pardoneth many sins, and accepts of what we do, though it come short of legal perfection; both on the account of the mediation of Christ."(55).

Christ during His earthly life added no new precepts to those already expressed in the Law. The Socinians had cited the injunction concerning Baptism and the Lord's Supper as instances to the contrary; but although obedience is involved in their observance, the rites themselves ought to be regarded as privileges rather than duties because they are above all declarations concerning the divine forgiveness (56). They are methods of representing the Gospel, or tokens of the divine love and mercy(57). The Socinians regarded them as precepts because they had no knowledge of Christ's mediation or of effectual grace.(58).
The Socinian statement, that Jesus Christ was the first to command men to pray, contradicts the Old Testament, which shows that the saints who lived before the Incarnation were not only commanded to pray but even to pray in the name of the promised Christ(59). It was through Him that they obtained salvation.(60). They could take His mediation and intercession for granted although they could not mention Him by name.(61). Apart from this, however, the Law of Nature demands that all men should pray that they may acknowledge their dependence upon their Creator.(62). Hence it cannot be supposed that it was Christ during His life on earth who first issued the command to pray.

Though there was no need for Him to add any commands or precepts to those already made known to man, He found it necessary to correct many of the interpretations(offer by His predecessors) of the divine Law:

"He declares the true sense of its commands, their nature, signification, and extent, vindicating them from all the corrupt and false glosses which then passed current in the Church, whereby there was an abatement made of their efficacy and an indulgence granted unto the lusts of men."(63).

For instance, men had interpreted the commands, "Thou shalt not kill" and "Thou shalt not commit adultery" as if they merely referred to the perpetration of the deeds, whereas Jesus shows that they were intended to apply also to the inward spiritual condition that makes it possible for anyone to commit such deeds. Other erroneous interpretations were due to the tendency to regard commands (e.g., "An eye should be taken for an eye") which were originally intended to govern only international relationships, as if they had been meant to rule the conduct of the individual. Only the State, or persons acting in an official capacity on behalf of the State, should allow itself to be guided by this principle. This
is also true of the command to love our neighbours and to hate our enemies, which explains why the Israelites were commanded to destroy certain nations upon their entrance into Canaan. But God commands individuals to return good for evil, to refrain from anger, and to love their enemies. (64).

It is clear from this that Owen recognized an ethical dualism, that he believed the inward morality of individuals should be regulated by one ethical code, and external, official morality by another. His belief in the perfection and immutability of the Law of Nature caused him to adopt this method to harmonize the teaching of Christ and of the New Testament with the ethical standards of the Mosaic Law. Like Calvin he was not conscious of the "need to justify and balance the radical ethic of love of the Sermon on the Mount over against the claims of the social ethic of the practical life of politics and of Society." (65).

If it were not for Christ's expositions of the Moral Law, whether through His own personal ministry in the flesh or through other agencies, men would have failed to perceive that the Law demands that they should perform certain duties. These would have been hidden from them; they would not know how to perform the divine will either in the sphere of morals or of worship. This is why we should attach supreme value to His teaching. Among the duties especially emphasized by Him are:-

"faith in God through Himself, brotherly love, denial of ourselves in taking up the cross, doing good for evil, with some others of the same kind... He also teacheth us all those ordinances of worship wherein our obedience unto Him belongs unto our holiness also, whereby it is enlarged and promoted." (66).

C.

The fundamental difference in the views respectively held by the Socinians and Owen concerning Christ's prophetic work consisted in this: the former believed that He received special privileges which qualified Him to perform the duties attached to
His prophetic office, while the latter held that He was the Prophet of the Church in virtue of His essential nature and being. Owen's doctrine corresponds to the judgment of faith, which knows that Christ is our Mediator on account of what He is in Himself, and that the revelation in Him cannot be grasped except by those who believe in Him as the Son of God. Under the Covenant of Grace the righteousness of the believer is a free divine gift; the righteousness of Christ is reckoned to him as if he himself had done what he ought to do. Since our very existence within the sphere of history is a sinful existence, and since we cannot obey the Law, our only hope lies in the attitude of God towards us in Christ. Faith recognises Him as One who is ready to forgive our sins, to accept us in the Mediator, and to give us power to obey His precepts. Salvation is obtained not through our own moral achievements, but through the mercy of the Father.

Owen rightly regarded this as the crux of the New Covenant or as the essence of the Gospel-message. He clearly shows that this does not mean that divine Grace was manifested for the first time during Christ's historical life. He conforms with traditional Protestant theology in regarding Christ's personal ministry and His prophetic work after the Exaltation as a continuation of the revelation that had been imparted before the Incarnation. This is confirmed by the Old Testament, where God's favour is represented as free and undeserved, and where obedience is the correlative of repentance and the consequence of faith. But whereas the Socinians had drawn a too rigid line of demarcation between the pre-Christian and post-Christian eras, Owen's tendency was to err in the opposite direction. His static conception of revelation caused him to declare that the Gospel had been delivered in its perfection before the coming of Christ, whose
task was to unfold and to fulfil God's first promise to Adam, and to expound the contents of Natural Law.

This conception of static immutability of revelation, however, does not completely dominate his theology. When he was dealing with the divine promises it was frequently replaced by the idea of growth and progress. He perceived that the promises could only have been partially revealed to the prophets and saints of the Old Testament, and that after the Saviour's Exaltation they were continually revealed through the Holy Spirit to the Church. Even during His earthly life Christ could not have imparted the whole truth to His followers, so that our knowledge of the implications of His mediation depends a great deal upon the witness of the Apostles and of the Church. As the ancient prophets pointed forward to Him, so the Apostles point backwards. His true significance could only be perceived by the Church after the Resurrection. Her witness to the salvation that is to be obtained through Him consists in what Christ could only reveal to her after He had been glorified. This was a vital part of His prophetic work.

"The believer's duty to bear witness to Christ is quite different from the task of the Son of God when He was in the form of a servant; it was His mission to carry out, in the hiddleness of an historical life, the divine work of redemption, and in so doing to reveal Himself."(68).

Owen, accordingly, faithfully retained the truth that the whole of Scripture ought to be regarded as a record of Christ's prophetic work. "Not in the life of Jesus,...but in the whole Scripture do we know the revelation of God in Jesus Christ."(69).

In his detailed consideration of the New Covenant promises also he correctly interpreted the teaching of the Bible. The Socinians taught that the promise of resurrection, and of life beyond the grave, was revealed for the first time in the New Testament. But while there is a marked indifference towards the
question of immortality in the Old Testament, to say that it contains no references to it is untrue. Owen rightly referred to the fact that Enoch is said to have received this gift, and Elijah is represented as having been translated into Heaven without going by way of Sheol. But the doctrine itself could not be clearly formulated until the idea of personal responsibility had been developed, and this did not occur until a comparatively late date in the history of Israel. A resurrection to a life of rewards and punishments in the coming age is for the first time explicitly mentioned in Daniel xii., 2,3. In the New Testament, however, the idea came to have an entirely new significance, since it was required by the whole background of Christian thought and experience. Thus it became one of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian religion.

Owen's conception of the Law as something unchangeable and immutable hardly agrees with the facts of history. The mass of material generally known as the "Law" was itself the fruit of a lengthy process of development. Men who belonged to widely separated periods in the history of the Jewish nation were led by God to formulate promises and precepts which revealed as much of the divine will as men could then assimilate. Thus the Law was enriched and modified as man's ethical life developed, and this process continued until the appearance of Jesus Christ. We may safely say that even now no man knows the whole content of the Moral Law. That Law was revealed in part before Christ appeared in the flesh; men saw it exemplified in His personal teaching and character; and through the Word, the Spirit, and the Church, He continually enables men to obtain glimpses of new vistas of truth and obedience.
One result of Owen's belief in the immutability of the Law as revealed in the Old Testament was that, like other Calvinists, he was compelled to show that there was complete harmony between the ethical teaching of Moses and that of Christ. As we saw, he attempted to do this by supposing that different ethical codes should regulate "official" conduct and individual morality respectively. This distinction, however, cannot be valid, because the State has no existence apart from the individuals of which it is composed, and ultimately it must be regarded as a confession that the moral codes of Moses and of Christ cannot be harmonised. To accept the New Testament as the rule of life and practice implies that many ethical judgments contained in the Old Testament must be rejected. Perhaps it is true "that Jesus taught nothing but a modified Judaism", and that "some parallel has been found for almost every Gospel saying, every Christian belief" (70), but He was incomparable in His ability to sift the true from the false in the thought of the great religious teachers of the past, and He was unique because His teaching was perfectly embodied in His own life and character. Thus the Law was fulfilled in Him. He provides the norm for distinguishing what is valuable from what is worthless. He reveals the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the sordidness of sin, and the beauty of holiness; in Him we have assurance of eternal life - a life of complete communion with God that brings with it the hope of immortality; and in His name we have forgiveness of sins and strength to believe and to obey. Through His infinite love and the continued presence of His Spirit He draws us into His service. Hence He is the great Prophet of the Church.
FOOT-NOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN (PART TWO).

2. "Racovian Catechism", 148-151; Biddle, "Scripture Catechism", 42.
5. "Racovian Catechism", 142-143. The word "bodily" is said to refer to His "true and solid knowledge of the divine will."
6. Ibid., 169.
9. Ibid., 91.
10. Ibid., 95-96. (1655)
13. Ibid.
20. Here he refers to the fact that Biddle dealt with His prophetic office and His mediation respectively in two separate chapters. "Scripture Catechism", Chaps. vii, viii.
30. Curtis, Article on "Confessions". (E.R.E., Section 16, 875b).
34. Ibid., 362.
35. "Pneumatologia". "Works", III., 621; Cf. 279, 328, 619.
37. "The Everlasting Covenant, the Believer's Support under Distress" (1669). (The sermon was published posthumously in 1776.) "Works", IX., 418; Cf. 424-425.
(1654).
43. "Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers". "Works", VI., 64. (1650)
47. Ibid., 371.
48. Ibid., 343-344; Cf. "The Everlasting Covenant", "Works", IX., 418
53. "Of Communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" (1657)
"Works", II., 212.
54. "Two Short Catechisms" (1645), "Works", I., 476.
"The Chamber of Imagery in the Church of Rome laid open" (1683),
"Works", VIII., 561.
57. "A Vindication of the Animadversions on 'Fiat Lux!'") (1663),
"Works", XIV., 422; Cf. Troeltsch, "The Social Teaching of the
Christian Churches", II., 469, 483.
59. Ibid., 580.
60. "Of the Death of Christ, and of Justification" (1655), "Works",
XII., 607-608.
62. Ibid., 577; "A Discourse of the Work of the Holy Spirit in
Prayer" (1682), "Works", IV., 341.
67. Cf. Psalm lii., 10-12; Jer. xxxi., 33; Ezek. xxxvi., 26-27;
Isai. xliii., 25, etc.
69. Ibid., 434.
The fact that Socinianism regarded forgiveness of sins as the reward of virtue and not its spring was one of the main causes of its opposition to the doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction, and this in turn profoundly modified its conception of the divine nature itself (See ante, 188ff.). Christ's death, according to this School, was only indirectly related to forgiveness. It was through His resurrection that He obtained authority to grant forgiveness; but His death is also significant because without it the resurrection would never have occurred (1). Considered by itself, however, His death "is neither able to make us participants of His remission, nor is it really able to establish it for us"(2).

Nevertheless, it should be admitted that the Socinians frequently referred to His Passion as something that provides us with a greater "right" to expect pardon and eternal life. It is a pledge that these benefits will be conferred upon us.(3). His death has merit in the sight of God who, on account of it, takes a more lenient view of our failure to obey His will. Hence He truly died "for our sins".(4). These statements, however, should not be pressed too far. Since Socinianism was the first revolt against the traditional dogma, it was only natural that many remnants of the other view should still be retained by it even though they were not integrally connected with its basic teaching.

They thought of Christ as being above all the Founder of an ethical school, and regarded His death as the most significant event which confirmed the integrity and validity of His message. He remained faithful to His message even though He knew that ultimately this path could only lead to the Cross. Moreover,
when His death is considered in the light of the resurrection, it brings us consolation and peace. Here we perceive how a life of sorrows came to a happy and glorious termination, and so we are persuaded that we also shall enjoy similar blessedness after life's troubles are over. His sufferings also remind us that He who is now the Lord of all things has once tasted the bitterest trials of this world, and is therefore able to succour the distressed and to sympathise with our infirmities.(5).

Christ's death, however, did not differ in principle from that of other believers. Paul could claim that his sufferings were able to achieve something similar to those of Christ, while John and James could drink of the "same cup" as the Master Himself. Only in degree was His death different from that of other saints. His death was not specially demanded by divine Justice, for God can forgive all sins provided there is true repentance. The exercise of Justice or of Mercy depends solely on His good pleasure, so that there was no need of any "plan of salvation" either to satisfy His Justice or to enable Him to be merciful (6).

The term "redemption" is frequently used in the New Testament in connection with His death, and this has led orthodox theology to suppose that His death was the price paid by Christ either to Satan or to God to set men free from their captivity. This expression, however, should not be understood literally. In the Scriptures God is said to have "redeemed" Abraham, David, the people of Israel, and others, although these acts of liberation were not accompanied by the payment of an actual price to anyone. Hence not one of them can be regarded as "redemption" in the literal sense. But it must be granted that Christ's work resembles actual redemption in many respects. Man was held in bondage by sin,
the world, the devil, and eternal death, from which he was released by God and Christ. (7). But His death was not a true ransom because there was no one to receive it. It is unworthy to say that it was paid to the devil, and it is absurd to suppose that it was received by the Father who Himself had provided the victim. It is also unreasonable to imagine that Christ offered payment to the Father for our redemption, since the Father would be obliged to set us free after accepting the price. Although Christ's obedience was perfect it did not make God His Debtor. He owed that obedience on His own account, and so His reward - the redemption of others - was infinitely greater than what He had deserved. Our "redemption" is solely of divine grace (8). Neither Christ nor Moses offered Satisfaction, and yet both of them were Mediators. Christ is our Mediator because He proclaimed the divine Will, and sealed the revelation which He imparted with His own blood, while in Heaven He continues to hear the supplications of His people and to approach God on their behalf. (9).

Just as the Satisfaction-theory of the Atonement must be rejected as being contrary to Scripture and the demands of reason, so also must we reject the view that Christ bore the punishment inflicted by God as the Supreme Ruler upon those who transgress against His laws. Since God does not owe anything to anyone He does not owe punishment to sinners. Sinners, on the contrary, are His debtors; it is their obligation to suffer the penalty that is their due. "Every one has the power to prosecute his right, and likewise not to prosecute it, and to remit as much of it as he pleases." (10). The argument here is of an a fortiori character: if this is true in the case of man, how much more should we suppose it to be true in the case of God?
The searching criticisms offered by the Socinians of the traditional doctrine of the Atonement may be summarised briefly as follows:-

1. It implies that God does not freely forgive sins, for free forgiveness and Satisfaction are mutually exclusive. If He remits all sins He does not require Satisfaction; but if He accepts Satisfaction there is no real remission.

2. It is based on the false supposition that penalties due to some persons can be transferred to Another. Christ could not suffer the penalty to which sinners were liable.

3. The value of one eternal death could not be the same as that of innumerable eternal deaths.

4. Only if Christ were God by nature would His death have infinite value. But this would imply what is inconceivable, viz., that the divine nature died. If His suffering was finite, an infinite number of such deaths would be required to make Satisfaction for human sins.

5. Injustice is attributed to God for, if Christ were divine, He ought to have been satisfied with one drop of His precious blood.

6. His death could not have been a perfect Satisfaction if it only becomes efficacious after faith has been exercised.

7. Christ's Satisfaction is by itself insufficient if its imputation is to be attributed solely to divine Grace.

8. The doctrine encourages moral laxity and licentiousness. After God has exacted His due men naturally feel that they are under no further obligations to Him. If Christ paid the debt for our past and future sins, what motive have we left for leading a righteous life? (11).

There was actually no need to reconcile God to us, for in Him there was no real wrath or enmity. His love is eternal and unchangeable; and it was His love that caused Him to send forth His Son to effect our deliverance even when we were in a state of enmity against Him:

"Since that love of God, which was truly the highest, was the reason why God sent His most beloved Son in order that He might be a propitiation for our sins, it is necessary that God should have already previously laid aside anger against us... for should He not otherwise intensely love and not love at the same time?"(12).
incomparable teaching, His perfect example, His absolute fidelity even unto death, His resurrection and His exaltation, powerfully impel us to follow in His steps and to be reconciled with God.

B.

Christ's death was regarded by Owen as a Satisfaction required by the Father to atone for the sins of men. The antitheses of the theologies of Anselm, Calvin, and Luther, are set forth by him in their sharpest form: on the one hand, the Law, the moral demands, and the need for retribution, and on the other hand, the Gospel, the divine love, and effective grace. These are resolved by Christ's atoning death. He argues that since death was demanded by divine Justice as a satisfaction for human sins, there could be no forgiveness of sins without it (13). The Father would not have allowed Him to die if His Justice did not demand His death as a ransom or Satisfaction (14). His death would have been unnecessary if (as the Socinians supposed) men could be saved by a mere act of sovereign Will on the part of the Father, and in that case, since His nature is love, He would surely have spared His only Son (15). Hence the very fact of Christ's death proves its necessity; and this necessity arises from the fact that every sin against God's holy Will must be met with a corresponding punishment, that no one can be forgiven unless the divine Justice has been satisfied (16). In His death Christ provided this Satisfaction, and bore the punishment. In this way He did something for the Church which no one - even Paul, John, or James - besides Him could do.

His death has a threefold aspect. It may be regarded as a Price (ransom), a Penalty (punishment), or as a Sacrifice. Its sacrificial element will be considered in connection with His priestly Office. Here we shall merely consider the other two.
(a) **Christ's Death as a Price or Ransom.** Christ's death is
"Redemption", the payment He made to release sinners from captivity.

Owen defines *Redemption* as -

"the deliverance of any one from bondage or captivity, and the
misery attending that condition, by the intervention or
interposition of a price or ransom, paid by the redeemer to him
by whose authority he is detained, that, being delivered, he may
be in a state of liberty, at the disposal of the redeemer." (17).

In this case the Redeemer was Christ, who in His own blood paid the
price to the Father, who alone had the right to detain sinners in
captivity. It is God who holds sinners captive, for it is His Law
which they have transgressed and His Justice that requires
proportionate punishment. (18).

The value of His death is derived from an eternal Covenant
made between Him and the Father, whereby an agreement was reached
regarding the nature of the price to be paid. This Covenant consisted
in - "the will of the Father appointing and designing the Son to be
the Head, Deliverer, and Redeemer of His elect, His Church, His
people, whom He did foreknow, with the will of the Son
voluntarily, freely undertaking that work and all that was
requisite thereunto." (19).

After Christ had completed His own work the Father, on the basis of
this Covenant, glorified Him so that He became the Head of the Church
or of the redeemed community. (20).

The Socinians had denied that His death was a true ransom on
the ground that there was no one to receive it. This, however, is
untrue. It was received by the Father, whose Justice and Law demanded
it. But they were right in saying that it was not given to Satan, for
"Satan was to be conquered, not satisfied." (21). In ordinary human
transactions ransoms are generally paid in money, but even in those
cases they may take the form of personal service or anything
stipulated by the one to whom it is paid. Hence it is possible to
regard the Saviour's death as a real ransom. In one important respect,
however, it differed from other transactions, viz., because in this case the One who provided the ransom was also the One who received it. "His love is the cause of the price in respect of its procurement, and His justice accepts the price in respect of its merit."(22).

The price paid was the same in kind as that required from the transgressors themselves. Owen emphasises this in his rather futile controversy on the subject with Richard Baxter:

"Christ paid the same thing that was in the obligation, as if, in things real, a friend should pay twenty pounds for him that owed so much, and not any thing in another kind. And...I affirm that He paid idem, that is, the same thing that was in the obligation, and not tandemem, something equivalent thereunto, in another kind." (23).

Those who are thus redeemed have a claim upon divine Mercy. They cannot immediately reap the benefits of their Saviour's death, however, because this claim is an "ex foedere" claim, that is, the right to receive these blessings accrues to them. The Passion is a guarantee that they shall receive them in the appointed time (24). But they have no claim upon Christ, for they are entirely at the disposal of the Redeemer who, in virtue of His death, has the right to claim them from the Father:

"Considering His own appointment and constitution, that Jesus Christ by His death should merit and procure grace and glory for those for whom He died, it is of debt in respect of Christ that it be communicated to them."(24).

It is God's own privilege to decide when they are to receive absolution in Christ, and when that occurs they are also regenerated. Justification and actual deliverance from sin cannot be separated (25). Instead of encouraging immorality and licentiousness, Christ's Mediation has the contrary effect, for indeed there is "no such powerful motive unto our adherence unto Him in holy obedience."(27).

Before the payment of this ransom man was "under the curse of the Law". He was also in bondage to Satan, whom God employed to detain him in captivity. Satan desired to frustrate Christ's
redemptive work because he realised that its success would deprive him of his authority over man, "even as he who delivers a captive from the judge by a price delivers him also from the jailer who kept him in prison."(28). Hence through Christ man is set free - free from prison ("obnoxiousness to the divine wrath"), free from the jailer (Satan), and free from the shackles (his sins).(29).

No one else could have redeemed man in this way. As a redeemer Moses "typified" Christ, but the Socinian attempt to draw a parallel between them had no foundation in fact. The Mosaic redemption was merely the effect of power; Christ's was the result of paying a price.(30). Nevertheless, the redemption wrought by Christ is free. This is not altered by the fact that God's Justice demanded Satisfaction. It is free in relation to God because He freely willed it from all eternity. It is free in relation to us both because no satisfaction is required of us, and because salvation is not given to us on amount of our own merits (31).

"In the Gospel there is declared and tendered unto sinners an absolute free pardon of all their sins, without any satisfaction or compensation made or to be made on their part, that is, by themselves, - namely, on the account of the atonement made for them by Jesus Chris."(32).

(b) Christ's Death as a Penalty or Punishment. Owen defines "punishment" as -

"an effect of justice in him who hath sovereign power and right to order and dispose of offenders, whereby he that doth contrary to the rule of his actions is recompensed with that which is evil to himself, according to the demerit of his fault."(33).

Inasmuch as sin is an offence against God as Supreme Governor it must be punished in order that God may retain His Lordship over His creatures. The argument of Crellius - that He may choose whether or not to inflict punishment - is without force, for a distinction ought to be drawn between the right of a master and the right of a ruler. A master may dispense with his right to punish
without injury to himself, but a ruler or a judge cannot do this without renouncing his justice and injuring those who depend upon him. Since God is the Supreme Ruler of the universe, He punishes sin for "the good of the whole" and to preserve "the dependence of His creatures upon Himself."(34).

He inflicts this punishment either upon the transgressors themselves or upon Him who is willing and able to bear it.(35). By a sovereign act of Will He transferred the punishment deserved by punishment to His own Son. Hence Christ's death reveals the Father's Justice and Sovereignty:

"Now, these two acts are eminent in God in this business:-First, An act of severe justice, as a creditor exacting the payment of the debt at the hands of the debtor; which, where sin is the debt, is punishment;...the justice of God being repaired thereby in whatsoever it was before violated. Secondly, An act of sovereignty or supreme dominion, in translating the punishment from the principal debtor to the Surety, which of His free grace He Himself had given and bestowed on the debtor."(35).

The divine Sovereignty is also manifested in the fact that God has willed that only some persons should receive the Redemption provided through Christ's death. "Every sin hath its just recompense of reward either in the sinner or the Surety"(36): in the case of reprobates the offenders themselves are punished, but in the case of the elect He is punished who has been chosen to suffer on their behalf. Nevertheless, the elect are in a sense punished because they are united with Christ who is their Representative and Federal Head.

"The Church suffered in Him when He suffered for the Church; as He suffers in the Church when the Church suffereth for Him"(37). Justice merely declares that sin must be punished; it neither defines the time nor the degree of punishment. God Himself freely chose the time and the Person(38). Apart from Christ's Mediation, however, His attitude towards all men would be the same(39). The argument of Socinus - that God could not pardon any sin if Justice were an
essential property of His nature - could not be challenged if the Mediator were left out of account. (40). The elect are forgiven because Justice has received Satisfaction through the work and merit of Christ (41). In His death there was so much value and dignity that it would have sufficed to save the whole of humanity from destruction; but the Father willed that it should be otherwise - that its beneficent results should be "restrained to His 'people', and 'elect', His 'church', and 'sheep'" (42).

The Saviour suffered the actual penalty which the Law demanded from sinners:

"It is personal punishment that the Law originally requires; but He that undergoes the punishment (though He be not personally disobedient) which the Law judgeth to him that was personally disobedient, undergoes the idem that the Law requires" (43).

He did not suffer for His own sake, for He was sinless. He underwent the agony of death in its most ignominious form in order that sinners might have life and salvation. For their sake He suffered what the Law demanded:

"The Law threatened death... and He tasted death for us... The punishment of the Law is the curse; and He was made a curse.... The Law threatened loss of the love and favour of God, and He lost it." (44).

But in some important respects His sufferings differ from those of the reprobate. Finite creatures who have sinned against God must suffer eternal punishment; but in virtue of His own Majesty Christ could give Satisfaction by undergoing punishment of a limited duration. Death was unable to detain Him because He was the Son of God. Reprobates must suffer the torments of inherent sin, viz., those pangs of conscience which produce hatred of God and despair, but Christ experienced nothing of this nature because He only suffered the results of imputed sin. Hence He still loved the Father while He suffered, and He never faltered because He knew that even
the agony of the Cross would have a glorious issue. (45).

When the Socinians urged that He could not have suffered thus if He were essentially divine, they evidently did not understand that what could not be attributed to God was applicable to Christ in His mediatorial capacity. Although His human nature was destroyed on the Cross, and His body divided from the soul, yet the unity of His Person remained intact. He who had a divine nature was crucified though the divine nature itself could not be crucified. His death has infinite value because He who died was infinite. (46).

In his Governmental Theory of the Atonement Grotius went astray by supposing that He was punished in order that other members of the community might know the penalty of sin. In the Atonement, however, God acted not for the sake of the community but solely for His own glory. (47). Neither was punishment inflicted on Christ for the purpose of "correction", for He was perfectly innocent. Moreover, His prior fidelity and obedience prove that it ought not to be regarded as intended for instruction, which in His case would have been superfluous. Nor did He suffer as an example to others, for we cannot learn anything from the punishment of an innocent person. "He set us an example in His obedience, but He was not punished as an example." (48). It is also inadequate to say that He suffered as a Witness to the Truth. He died to bear the punishment that was due to the elect, and to pay a ransom on their behalf. To those for whom He suffered He gives faith that they may be actually delivered through His death. (49).

Sin has created an infinite gulf between God and man. Christ alone could cross it. He alone could reconcile the holy God with sinners like ourselves, and He alone could reconcile us to God. He effected this "Reconciliation" through His own death. Owen
defines "reconciliation in general" as "the renewal of lost friendship and peace between persons at variance"(50), and declares that this was precisely what occurred through the Cross. The Scriptures do not directly affirm that God was reconciled to man because it is the offending, and not the offended, party, who invariably is said to be reconciled. But the Pauline statement, that while we were yet enemies we were reconciled to Him (Rom.v., 10) obviously refers to this.(51). God was reconciled to sinners as a judge is reconciled to an offender, or as a king to a rebel.(52). And His reconciliation to us powerfully induces us to become reconciled to Him. There was enmity on both sides, and it would have been useless to reconcile one party without reconciling the other. Owen (rather crudely) describes the Socinian doctrine as being concerned with "a reconciliation hopping on one leg"!(53).

C.
Its doctrine of Man, its belief in human autonomy, its pride in the intellectual and moral achievements of the human race, led Socinianism to reject the Doctrine of Satisfaction as contrary to Scripture, reason, and morality. This movement began with Abelard, and can be traced through Socinianism, Schleiermacher, and Ritschl, down to our own times. Its characteristic attitude towards the death of Christ is expressed by Brunner thus:

"The Passion of Christ is merely regarded from the humanistic religious point of view as the highest proof of the perfect religious or moral union of Jesus with the Divine Will. The Cross is thus the supreme proof of Christ's fidelity to God - a fidelity maintained through the severest trials. Though the whole of the life of Jesus is a singular proof of love and fidelity, the Cross is the crowning act of this life, its high-water mark, its fulfilment."(54).

For the Socinians it was in reality no more than the death of a martyr, comparable to that of Paul, James, or John, and His love was the most notable example of human love at its best. The teaching of orthodoxy concerning "the scheme of salvation", the
idea that Christ has done something for man which man could never do for himself, the notion of an objective transaction which makes it possible for sinners to be justified, are entirely foreign to the theological scheme of the Socinians. On the Cross Christ shows man that he was completely mistaken in His conception of God as an angry and revengeful Being: in reality He is love, and from eternity He has desired that men should be reconciled with Him. It was unreasonable on the part of orthodox theology to imagine that a change had occurred in Him on account of Christ's Atonement, to suppose that once He was the God of Law and of Wrath who became a loving and gracious Father after His honour and justice had been satisfied. To suppose that God needed to be reconciled is an illusion. Reconciliation becomes a fact after human antagonism towards Him has been removed. In virtue of His love, His desire for human fellowship, God allowed Christ to die so that men might know Him as He really is (a Father who amply rewards true obedience), and thus be attracted to His service.

The traditional dogma started forth from entirely different premisses. It stressed the reality of sin, its guilt, and its magnitude. Sin has created such a barrier between God and man as can only be removed by a supreme act of self-sacrifice on the part of God. Repentance by itself cannot remove it; it cannot erase the guilt of the past and the deep-rooted tendencies towards evil in human nature. Sin is a personal act of rebellion against God, and it is immeasurably serious because it is an offence against Him. Our very attitude towards God has been perverted and this has caused a change even in God Himself. This is no merely subjective phenomenon but an objective fact.

Hence the divine Law demands the punishment of sin; the divine Nature requires an Atonement. To suppose that God can
overlook human sins is to think unworthily of His love and grace. Divine love is holy. "While justice is not the highest thing in the moral ideal or in the character of God, you can never think worthily of love or of grace if you deny justice."(55). God could not deny the demands of the moral order without denying Himself. Owen's doctrine was somewhat marred by a tendency to regard the divine reaction to sin as mechanical or automatic. This becomes clear in those passages where he contrasts those divine actions which are due to God's essential quality of Justice with others (e.g., the choice of the Son) which He declares to be the results of a sovereign act of Will on the part of God. The element of "necessity" that belongs to the divine punishment of sin, it should always be borne in mind that the divine reaction to sin is the attitude of an infinite Person towards finite persons; it is divine Wrath facing human guilt.

The removal of the obstacle that lies between God and man does not depend upon anything that man can do. God alone can remove it. Owen, accordingly, rightly taught that forgiveness is a free divine gift - a gift that we could never deserve. It is something that has been specially revealed to us by God. We should not have been able to know anything about it if we merely relied on our own capacity for logical deduction. Such a process would only lead us to draw the conclusion that every sin must receive its corresponding punishment. Forgiveness is not a "necessary truth" but a fact revealed through the mediatorial work of Christ.

How could God forgive sins without annihilating the moral order, the eternal Law which is the very basis of our ethical and spiritual life? The answer to this question is the "mystery" proclaimed by the Church in the doctrine of the Atonement. In
the Atonement, as Owen frequently stressed, we perceive both the divine Justice and the divine Love expressed in one supreme act - the death of the God-man. It is through this objective transaction alone that we have the certainty of forgiveness. The Socinians refused to believe in it because they thought that they could take the forgiveness of God for granted. They did this because they did not realise the seriousness of sin. Moreover, they were wrong in supposing that the doctrine which they supposed encouraged moral laxity. This is so far from being the case that it is really the only doctrine that presents the teaching of the New Testament concerning the terribleness of human sin. Paterson truly remarks that - "Even if the doctrine of penal substitution be regarded as only one among several possible theories, we cannot but appreciate the intensity of the moral earnestness which it presupposed, and also its singular adaptation to meet a deep religious need. It has been criticised as unethical; but it may be doubted if a more splendid tribute was ever paid to the dignity and the claims of the moral law than in the conception that sin is so awful and so shameful a scandal, and that it so entirely merits the extremity of punishment, that it was impossible for God to forgive it in the exercise of a paternal indulgence - that, on the contrary, mercy could "come into play when the appalling guilt had been expiated in the death of the Son of God, who was also the representative of mankind". (56).

Socinianism, Speculative Idealism, and Mysticism, all unite to disclaim the Cross because it deals such a severe blow to human pride. Socinianism believed that man could merit salvation; it had no sympathy with the doctrine of the Atonement (understood in the orthodox sense) because it implies that man must confess his absolute impotence to save himself. This School, accordingly, maintained that there was no need for an Incarnate Being, One begotten of the Father's essence, to die for the sin of the world. Their false doctrine of Man led them to form an inadequate doctrine of the Atonement, and this, in turn, gave rise to a weak Christology. Owen, on the other hand, perceived that man had fallen
so low that he could not save himself, and that the death of God's only-begotten Son was required to restore the fellowship between him and his Creator.

The New Testament employs the term "ransom" or "price" with reference to Christ's death in a metaphorical sense to express the truth that the Atonement was costly to God. It meant nothing less than divine self-humiliation. Such metaphors express the truth very inadequately, and so it is important that we should realise that they are only metaphors. The Socinians perceived this, but unfortunately they lost sight of the fundamental truth, whereas Owen held on to the truth although he committed the error of interpreting such terms literally - a fact that caused him to become implicated in many fruitless speculations concerning the nature and quantity of the ransom paid, etc. Metaphorical language of this nature must be used by finite beings like ourselves when we deal with questions of this kind. For example, when we consider how far the death of Christ reveals the nature of God we can only express the truths that have been revealed to us by means of paradoxes and antinomies because the underlying Unity is veiled from the sight of man. In the Atonement we recognise that God is just and merciful, free and necessitated. With Brunner we must be content with merely stating that -

"the Cross is the union of the divine freedom and necessity, and likewise the union of His holiness and mercy, of the infinite validity of the Law and the unlimited sovereignty of God, as the Lord of the Law." (57)

A different aspect of Christ's atoning work is expressed in the Scriptures by means of another metaphorical expression, viz., that of "penalty" or "punishment". Owen correctly indicated that God punishes sin as a king punishes rebellion, for only thus can He preserve His own sovereignty from those who desire to wrest it
from Him. Christ Himself became the Victim of sinners when He entered the sphere where sin reigned. God in Christ has borne the penalty on our behalf. The Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep. The Socinian conception of the Atonement is far too superficial. They imagined that the Father made salvation easier for us to attain because He was well pleased with Christ's obedience. They did not perceive that the whole situation was changed on account of what Christ did for us - that henceforth a new basis for our justification has been established. What they said concerning His death was true so far as it went, and their criticism of the orthodox dogma contributed a great deal towards eliminating many undesirable elements contained in it. (58). But the doctrine of the Cross itself, that is, the fundamental truth which it contains, was to them an "offence" which they sought to explain away.

The Socinians failed to explain why the New Testament attached so much importance to the Cross. Owen's doctrine, on the other hand placed the Cross in the centre. Although the Church has never defined her belief on the Atonement in an Oecumenical Creed, the Cross has always held a central place in the Christian religion owing to the continual celebration of the Lord's Supper, representing the broken body and the outpoured blood of Christ. By establishing this custom the Lord Himself indicated the special importance which He attached to His death.

Moreover, the doctrine of the Socinians does not indicate that an element of "necessity" was attached to His death. Here again the superiority of Owen's doctrine is manifest. Christ frequently spoke of its necessity, and said that it would take place at the hands of sinful men. "Moral" theories of the Atonement, and among them that of Socinianism, tend to make Him a martyr, that is,
one for whom death was not necessary but unavoidable under existing circumstances. Orthodox theories have preserved this element of necessity by stressing that His death was part of the divine plan of redemption, while the New Testament affirms that He is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Great emphasis is also placed in the Scriptures upon His death as being of His own free will. He courted His own Crucifixion: He finally decided to face Jerusalem when He was at Caesarea Philippi, out of the reach of His enemies. He not merely accepted death, as the Socinians taught; He chose it. This is frequently stressed by Owen, who traces it back to the eternal divine Covenant. The voluntary quality of His death is important, for it is this above all that reveals the magnificent love at the heart of the Atonement.

Justice and Mercy are really two aspects of the same divine quality, but all doctrines of the Atonement which are related to that of Anselm have tended to divide them. Anselm's own doctrine, for instance, has been criticised on the ground that it makes Christ represent Mercy over against the Father's Justice. Thus unintentionally the Father and the Son appear to be entirely different characters. Such criticisms, however, may be pressed too far. After all, it was the Father who sent the Son, and so the Father's love was also revealed in the Atonement. Owen's doctrine also gives the impression of artificiality when He contrasts the divine Justice with divine Love. But it is possible, as we have already indicated, that such paradoxes can never be entirely removed from any doctrine of the Atonement that seeks to present the New Testament teaching on the subject. The Socinians, however, made a valuable contribution by warning us of the danger
of supposing that Christ induced God's love on Calvary. What the Saviour did was to reveal that love.

The Socinians deserve to be commended for drawing attention to the moral aspect of Christ's death, and for stressing the close relationship existing between Calvary and the Resurrection, both of which were parts of God's saving activity. Above all, they should be praised for perceiving that Christ through His death made it possible for us to change our attitude towards God. He cut through the hardness of our heart in a manner that would otherwise be impossible. They interpreted Scripture correctly when they said that it was man who required to be reconciled and not God. The Father has always loved us in spite of our sins. His Anger is only an aspect of His holy Love; it expresses His desire that we should be freed from what hinders us to enjoy complete fellowship with Him. The Atonement, that is, the revelation of the divine Love on the Cross, has, however, greatly modified our attitude towards Him, for through the Saviour's death, the eternal, pre-existent, unchangeable divine Love was revealed in its boundless magnificence. Hence Owen, like the "Westminster Confession", contradicted Scripture when He stated that God was reconciled to us. But his meaning is clear. He wanted to express the truth that sin was an obstacle in the way of God to forgive as well as an obstacle that prevented men from receiving redemption. This obstacle was removed by Christ's atoning death. Hence it is through Christ alone that God can forgive, for it is His Cross that makes us forgivable.
FOOT-NOTES TO CHAPTER EIGHT (PART TWO).

   "Interea tamen haudquaquam negamus, Christi mortem veluti indirecte, seu mavis secundario, conditionem quandam fuisse remissionis peccatorum nobis concedendae; quatenus conditio fuit Christo imposita, sine qua potestatem obtinere ex Dei decreto non potuit peccata nobis remittendi, et nos ab aeterno interitu vindicandi." Quoted (with modifications) by Owen, "Works", XII, 599.

2. Socinus, "Justificationis Nostrae per Christum Synopsis".
   "Opera", I., 603; Cf. 601.


4. "Satisfaction", writes Harnack ("The History of Dogma", VII., 158; Foot-note 2), "is derived from the presupposition of a reciprocal relationship that rests upon a purely legal order; merit from a reciprocal relationship which is moral, but is not conceived of from the highest point of view of law and duty."


6. Ibid., 280, 308.


9. Ibid., 316-317.


14. "Of Communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" (I657), "Works", II., 84.

15. Ibid., 96.


19. Ibid., 497; "Salus Electorum, Sanguis Jesu; or, The Death of Death in the Death of Christ" (I647), "Works", X., I68ff.


23. "Of the Death of Christ, the Price He Paid, and the Purchase He Made", (I650); "Works", X., 438.


27. "Pneumatologia; or, A Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit" (I674) "Works", III., 572.

44. Ibid., 327, 431, 453.
47. "Of the Death of Christ, the Price He Paid, and the Purchase He Made", "Works", X., 450.
49. Ibid., 535.
50. Ibid., 541.
55. Brunner, Op. cit., 454. I have found Brunner's treatment of this question very helpful both to understand the significance of Owen's position and also to formulate my own views.
The wide diffusion of sin in the world has caused much speculation as to whether man is by nature capable of obeying the will of God. The views held on this subject may be broadly divided into two groups: some believe that he has the power to choose whether or not to obey, and that his final destiny depends on his own efforts, while others argue that since his nature has been so much corrupted and stained by sin, he has no hope of salvation except by complete dependence and trust on the love and mercy of God. Controversy on this subject has in various degrees engaged the attention of Christian theologians since the days of Pelagius and Augustine, and it was one of the issues at stake between the Socinians and the Calvinists.

Socinianism revived the Pelagian view by affirming that men in their present condition were able to conform with the commands of God and so to merit salvation. Naturally it was necessary that God should in the first place reveal the way of salvation, for He alone could determine the reward of obedience and the method of attaining it; but once he had obtained that knowledge man could conform with the demands made upon him. It was conceded to orthodox theology that only a few had succeeded in attaining perfection, and the divine assistance was needed to realise the high objective set before us. Since God, however, willingly gave those who truly sought Him all the help which they needed, the rejection of some persons as unworthy of salvation was solely due to their own disobedience. The divine assistance given to man was of twofold - internal and external, the former including all the promises and threats of the New Covenant, and the latter consisting of the
the activity of the Spirit, who imprints these promises and threats on his heart. The Spirit clarifies the understanding, strengthens the will, represses violent passions, and expels all manner of sloth. (1).

The Socinians then contend that since man is by nature able to obey God, there can be no truth in the doctrine of the fall and of original sin. When Adam was created he possessed free will, and it was his duty to render obedience to his Creator. But like ourselves he was subject to death, while his original righteousness did not differ in any essential respect from that of his descendants at the hour of birth. So far was he from perfection that he ought to be regarded merely as an undeveloped man, whose knowledge was very limited, and who was actually neither just nor innocent because he had no opportunity to sin before the fall, and therefore had no occasion to abstain from sinning (2). His descendants were not deprived of their moral autonomy on account of his sin. If God had deprived Adam himself or his posterity of their freedom He would not be a just and merciful Being, since without freedom the Law cannot be obeyed. The doctrine of original sin thus casts a reproach on God Himself. It is also absurd to assume that the whole race was corrupted by one act of disobedience on Adam's part - an act which it is reasonable to suppose could not have had such an effect even on Adam's own nature. Adam's guilt could not corrupt his posterity because they had no share in it (3). But although sin is not transmitted through the physical propagation of the species, it must be granted that since we have so many examples of evil-doing before us there is in us a strong disposition towards wickedness. (4).

Since the Father is just and merciful, and since man possesses the ability to obey His will, all men have an equal opportunity to obtain salvation. The Calvinistic doctrine of
predestination must be rejected both because it presents a totally wrong conception of the divine nature and because it denies human freedom. It implies that God is unjust when it asserts that He punishes men for not doing what they were incapable of doing on account of His own decree. It makes Him a hypocrite by representing Him as One who offers salvation to all men, while actually He had excluded the majority of them from eternity. By declaring that He seeks the conversion of those whom He knew could not be converted it implies that He lacks prudence. It even suggests that He is the Author of sin:

"Since it is altogether necessary that sin should precede damnation, certainly He who absolutely decrees that anyone shall necessarily be damned, does also ordain that he should necessarily sin." (5).

Moreover, the doctrine is completely unethical, for to suppose that human destiny has been absolutely pre-determined must imply that all human efforts towards piety and virtue are superfluous. (6).

In reality the Bible simply affirms that before the foundation of the world God decreed that those who believed in Him and obeyed His commands would receive the reward of eternal life, while those who refused to believe and to obey would be punished with eternal damnation. Divine predestination is therefore conditional and takes for granted that each one is able to decide his own destiny. It is also possible for one who was once a believer to become an unbeliever. A virtuous man may cease to obey God. For this reason even the Father cannot know what our ultimate destiny will be until the close of our earthly life. On account of their outstanding wickedness, however, certain persons (such as Pharaoh and Judas) have been reprobated even during their lifetime(7). But it is necessary that we should know that it is entirely a person's own fault if He is reprobated. God's love is universal, and only in so
far as we have confidence in its universality can we venture to approach Him. If the elect are only few in number no one would have the right to suppose that he is among them - the contrary being "ten thousand to one more likely". God desires to save "the world"; it is His will that the Gospel should be preached to "every creature" and that none should "perish but have everlasting life". (8).

Our election, accordingly, depends on our faith and obedience. Faith is the adjustment which man makes to the commands and promises of the New Covenant, and when it is sincere it supplies what is defective in our obedience, so that, as Harnack indicates, in the Socinian system it is the counterpart of the Roman Catholic notion of submission to the Church. Saving faith is more than a mere intellectual assent to the truth of Christ's doctrine; it must invariably be accompanied by the performance of good works, involving an expectation of the fulfilment of Christ's promises and complete submission to the divine will.

On account of their failure to understand Paul's meaning when he reprimanded those who sought justification by performing the works of the Law, many persons have erroneously thought that the performance of good works was unnecessary for our deliverance. It is true that no believer is justified by the Law, but it is equally true that every believer is obliged to obey the Law. (9). While Paul excluded those legal works which left no room for the operation of Grace or for the exercise of faith, he never denied that "justifying faith" was a "working faith" that should be accompanied by righteousness. James emphasised that it was wrong to suppose that good works played no part in the attainment of salvation. Hence Paul stressed the need for faith, and James the necessity of good works, the whole truth being - that faith must
be accompanied by righteousness. According to Biddle, there are
two types of "justification" or "righteousness" - "the righteousness
which is of the Law", and "the righteousness which is of God by
faith". The former can only be attained by rendering perfect
obedience to the whole Law, but the latter can be attained by
believing in Christ and His Resurrection.(10).

Justification consists in absolution from the guilt of
sin and from liability to punishment. Before He absolves us in this
fashion God takes into consideration our faith, our desire to obey,
and our actual obedience. It is on account of these things that He
regards and treats man as if He were innocent.(11). But although
justification never occurs apart from faith and personal holiness,
it is essentially a divine act, and so it would be incorrect to
regard these things as its causes:

"As it is necessary to guard lest we say ... that holiness and
innocence of life are the effects of our justification before
God, so we ought diligently to beware lest we believe holiness
itself and innocence to be our justification before God, and
lest we affirm that that is the efficient and impulsive cause
of our justification before God, rather than only the cause with­
out which God has decreed that justification cannot have any
bearing upon us."(12).

God does not pronounce us innocent because He imputes to us the
righteousness of Christ. To imagine that our justification can be
attributed to an objective transaction, such as Christ's death
regarded as a Price paid or a Punishment suffered on our behalf,
is exceedingly detrimental to growth in holiness and virtue.(13).

It is our own personal condition and attainment which He takes into
account:

"That which is really in us is attributed to us by God - not
something which is not in us, or is in Another, - that is,
what we have firmly determined in the mind ... that we desire
to run the proposed course of faith." (14).
The first essential truth to be borne in mind when formulating the doctrine of Man, according to Owen, is his impotence to obey the Law because of his own sinful and corrupt condition. He points out that the Law is good, but that it would be fallacious to argue from the nature of the Law to the possibility of its observance, - as the Socinians did. The Law demands that every human being should render perfect obedience to its demands, but his nature is so depraved that he cannot do this. This truth is expressed in the Christian doctrine of the fall and of original sin.

In the beginning God created Adam, the first man, in His own image, and made him a perfect being. His knowledge was complete and his conduct upright. In that condition of original righteousness his existence was not threatened by corruption and mortality, and he possessed the right to enjoy eternal blessedness. He was preserved in this state by God Himself, in whom he had complete trust and confidence:

"A universal rectitude of nature, consisting in light, power, and order, in his understanding, mind, and affections, was the principal part of this image of God wherein he was created, .....his soul was made meet and able to live to God, as his sovereign Lord, chiefest good, and last end."(15)

But when he fell from this pristine perfection through his own sin and disobedience, a great change occurred in him: he became liable to death (16), and the principle of sin even took root in his very nature, so that from that time forth there was in him a tendency to disobey his Creator. His will became so enslaved that he lost the power to perform good works, and his understanding was darkened to such an extent as to make him incapable of comprehending the end designed for him by God. Moreover, these evil results were inherited by all his descendants. The whole human race was corrupted
through the fall. Since Adam acted in a representative capacity his
guilt was imputed to us all. (17). Moreover, we were all in one
sense responsible for what he did because we were all in him at the
time. This is why even little children before they have become
responsible for their actions suffer from the effect of the fall:

"Their whole nature is overspread with such a pollution as is
proper only to sin inherent, and doth not accompany sin imputed."
(18).

All these terrible consequences, including the universal prevalence
of original sin, can only be attributed to the fall, since it was
"the only interposition of general concernment to all the sons of
men". (19). It was the only action of this character that occurred
before the human race was divided into its various sections.

Man himself is therefore responsible for the introduction
of sin into the world. God was not its cause, for He had created
man righteous and had given him power to obey His will. Nevertheless,
the fall could not have been an accident in the sight of God. His
Nature is such that He must have foreknown its occurrence, so that
although He was not responsible for it, it could only have occurred
by the divine appointment. But this did not lessen its seriousness.
The universal scope of the punishment which followed proves that
He regarded it as nothing less than a token of rebellion against
His Sovereignty. A comparatively insignificant act gained
"sacramental and symbolical" significance because Adam, acting as
the federal head of the human race, had broken the Covenant which
existed between him and his Maker, and had thus forfeited the
blessings accruing from its observation. For this reason all his
descendants were righteously involved in the same misery. (20).

Even in their sinful condition men still have certain
notions concerning the implications of a system of rewards and
punishments, and are able in some measure to distinguish between
good and evil. Holiness, however, is beyond their reach, their best efforts to acquire it being far from satisfying the divine Justice. Their "philosophical virtues" are but "glorious vices".

"The best of the intellectual or moral habits of our minds, which are but the natural improvement and exercise of our faculties, neither are nor can be our holiness", for these "may all be resolved into fear of punishment and hope of reward, with some present satisfaction of mind, on the account of ease in conscience within or outward reputation, whether in abstinence from sin or the performance of duties." (21).

All human actions which are not the outcome of a living faith in God have no merit in His sight. Pietistic Puritanism of the type represented by Owen tended to go much farther than Calvin in its depreciation of secular civilizations and cultures, since it "intensified the fundamental asceticism of Calvinism, and in so doing it broke with the world,...having no use for anything which goes beyond all that is directly utilitarian and necessary." (22).

After the fall, men found that they were in the hopeless position of having no strength to obey the Law, while the Law continued to demand from them unconditional obedience. Every attempt on their part to achieve salvation through their own unaided efforts was doomed to fail because their whole nature was depraved by sin. It is only when they realise this that the need for a Saviour is felt. The whole scheme of Salvation presupposes the existence of original sin, and so this doctrine should be an essential article in every Christian Creed. Because original sin resides within man he cannot act contrary to it: indeed he perpetually identifies his own will with it (Cf. Gen. vi., 5, viii., 21). (23).

We therefore perceive that the holy and righteous God who demands from human beings absolute obedience, the penalty for disobedience being eternal death, is confronted by human beings
who are incapable of obeying Him. This can only point to one conclusion: if men are to attain salvation God Himself must take the initiative. Salvation must be His gift. The Gospel is the "good news" that the Father has taken compassion upon us and given us a Saviour who can release us from bondage. Human sin made this a necessity:

"It is sin only that makes a Saviour necessary; and shall Christians tolerate such an error as, by direct consequence, infers the coming of Jesus Christ into the world to be needless?" (24).

The teaching of the Bible and the observed facts of life clearly indicate that all men are not saved, and since salvation is a divine gift God Himself must be considered responsible for distinctions of this character. This is expressed in the Scriptural doctrine of Predestination, which affirms that God, as the Sovereign Lord of all things, has willed from eternity that some persons ("the elect") shall receive salvation and participate in eternal life, while the rest of mankind ("the reprobate") are left in their sinful condition to bear the punishment that is their due. This doctrine attributes no injustice to Him, for He was not obliged to bestow salvation on any sinner. The reprobate simply receive what they deserve, while the elect are chosen to be the special objects of His love and mercy.

"Before the foundation of the world, out of His own good pleasure, He chose certain men, determining to free them from sin and misery, to bestow upon them grace and faith, to give them unto Christ, to bring them to everlasting blessedness." (25).

It should be observed that election occurs "in Christ", and it is this decree that determines the scope of the Atonement. The Father willed that Christ should die for the elect, and so ultimately their salvation is assured. The Saviour could not have died for the reprobate, for it is absurd to suppose that His death cannot achieve the purpose for which it was intended. Far from
deriving benefits from the Atonement, the reprobate incur greater damnation because their guilt is enhanced through their rejection of its blessings. Christ only died for the elect, who alone can be saved. They actually belong to Christ before they are born; from eternity they are His according to the Father's decree. Time may elapse before they surrender to Him and receive Him into their hearts, for obviously the doctrine of election is not incompatible with the idea that the elect are justified at a particular moment in time. Although predestination is eternal, no man was justified from eternity. Moreover, justification is always accompanied by regeneration, for:

"at the same time wherein God absolves us in Heaven, the term of the stipulation for our deliverance being accomplished, by reckoning Christ to us, ...He infuses a principle of life into our souls, whereby radically and virtually the whole is accomplished."

Reprobation is the correlative of election. God's love is universal in the sense that He liberally provides for the material well-being of all His creatures, but His love in Christ is limited or "peculiar", being directed towards some rather than others. His Gratia universalis should therefore be distinguished from the Grace of election. Apart from Christ sinners know Him only as the God of Law, of Terror, of Judgment; in Christ alone do they recognise Him as the God of Grace and Mercy. It may be supposed that many have not been provided with adequate means of Grace because God has not intended that they should be saved. The Scriptures state that the elect are "few" in number. We may even presume that many who have enjoyed the privileges of the Gospel will not receive salvation, for in addition to them it is necessary that men should experience the power of the Holy Spirit imprinting the truths of revelation on their minds and hearts.
Salvation presupposes the miracle of regeneration, the divine act that restores man into fellowship with God, the new creation whereby "the Holy Spirit renews in us the image of God; the original implantation whereof was His peculiar work". (29).

God's chosen people must live in the world though they are not of the world: they must both renounce the world and conquer it. Protestant asceticism differs from that of Roman Catholicism in that it does not produce a desire to leave the world to its fate. Troeltsch indicates that Calvinistic asceticism is an "intramundane asceticism", which combines discipline with strenuous activity for the sake of the Kingdom. Owen frequently emphasises these two aspects:

"Men are apt to think that abstinence from the pollutions that are in the world through lust, the keeping themselves from the sins and defilements of the world, and inclining to that party that is not of the world, is profession. These things are good; but our profession consists in the observation of Christ's commands, what He requires of us. 'Go, teach them'." (30).

The Socinians erroneously thought that the doctrine of Predestination discouraged men from approaching the Father with confidence, because of the unlikelihood that they should be among the elect. There would be some force in this contention if God had revealed the names of His chosen ones, for the others would obviously be unable to draw near to Him with confidence. If God had told us who were the elect "the main end of the Word, the nature of faith, and all the ordinances of the Gospel" would be destroyed. But now all men may believe that they are elected. No one should approach the Father on account of His eternal decrees, but in complete reliance upon His promises and in obedience to His commands:

"The issue that lies before them...is not whether they are elected or no, but whether they will believe or no; God having given them eternal and unchangeable rules." (31).

Those who believe in a "universal Atonement" mainly rest their
ease on those Scriptural passages which affirm that He died for "all" or for "the world". Owen reproduces the familiar Calvinistic retort to these contentions - that such words ought to be understood in a distributive sense, that they do not denote the whole human race but some members of every nation and class throughout the world. They are employed to emphasise the truth that His redemptive work was not confined to the Jewish people. (32).

Both the elect and the reprobate exist to glorify their Creator. On the elect He bestows all that is good, and so they are symbols of His Mercy and Love, whereas the reprobate are symbols of His Anger and Wrath:

"God's aim is only the manifestation of His own glory....and this by the way of goodness and severity, ....goodness, in faithfulness and mercy, preserving His who are opposed, whereby His glory is exceedingly advanced; - severity towards the oppressors, that, by a sinful, cursed opposition, they may fill up the measure of their iniquities, and receive this at the hand of the Lord, that they lie down in sorrow, - wherein also He is glorious." (33).

Hence the fundamental idea expressed in the doctrine of Predestination is that of the divine Majesty and Glory.

God bestows on His elect all the means and blessings which they need for salvation. A glorious destiny is guaranteed for them by God's eternal decree. The divine attributes and promises assure the saints that they shall persevere in the state of Grace to the very end:

"There is nothing more infallibly certain than that he who pursues sincerely and diligently the ways of faith and obedience, - which are...the fruits of election, - shall obtain in the end everlasting blessedness, and, ordinarily, shall have in this world a comfortable evidencem of his own personal election." (34).

The elect are the heirs of all the blessings which derive from Christ's Atonement, the chief blessing being the gift of the Holy Spirit, who gives them strength to believe. The Socinians were wrong in supposing that only believers received the Spirit, for
without Him no one can exercise the initial act of faith. Yet believers also receive Him in increasing measure. Through Him are they justified and sanctified; that is, through Him they are accepted by God for Christ's sake, while their enmity against God is destroyed. God's Spirit is ever active in the believer, imparting to him the gifts of adoption, supplies of new grace, joy, consolation, and peace. (35).

Justification is the spring of all Christian virtues; the soul rejoices in communion with God and complete surrender to His service when it knows that its sins have been forgiven for Christ's sake. Conduct flows from the divine gift of faith, which cannot exist without expressing itself in good works. Only this type of virtue is acceptable in the sight of God:

"For there is no duty of it, but we are obliged to perform it in faith through Christ, on the motives of the love of God in Him, of the benefits of His mediation, and the grace we receive by Him: whatever is otherwise done by us is not acceptable unto God". (36).

The Socinians had supposed that good works were the conditions of justification, and that God had made the attainment of justification under the New Covenant easier than it had previously been, by revealing that henceforward He would regard imperfect works, when supplemented by faith and a true desire to obey, as the equivalent of the perfection which hitherto He had demanded. But this theory completely misrepresented the case. Evidently no man could be justified on account of his works unless they were perfect, and the Gospel nowhere declares that it is easier to obtain justification now than it had formerly been. On the contrary it proclaims that there exists a totally different basis for justification. The former was founded on merit, the latter on divine Grace; and

"those who go about to found a merit of ours in the grace of God do endeavour to unite and reconcile those things which God
hath everlastingly separated and opposed"(37).

We were justified because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us: we obey because obedience is bestowed on us by the Holy Spirit. (38).

"Our evangelical obedience, which is accepted with God, according to the tenor of the new covenant, doth not hold the same place which our obedience should have had under the covenant of works; for therein it should have been our righteousness absolutely before God, that whereby we should have been justified in His sight, even the works of the Law, and for which, in a due proportion of justice, we should have been eternally rewarded. But this place is now filled up by the righteousness and obedience of Christ, our Mediator, which, being the obedience of the Son of God, is far more eminent and glorious,... than all that we should have done had we abode steadfast in the covenant of works."(39).

Good works under the New Covenant are the means by which the believer moves towards the goal set before him in the decree of election. They are not the conditions of salvation but the channels through which the believer works out his election. Righteousness invariably accompanies justifying faith, and is the visible sign of its sincerity:

"He that thinks to please God and to come to the enjoyment of Him without holiness makes Him an unholy God, putting the highest indignity and dishonour imaginable upon Him."(40).

It is not for us to enquire why good works are necessary when our justification is assured on another ground, since it is sufficient for us to know that "God has ordained that we shall walk in them." (41).

Moreover, there is no real conflict between the views of Paul and James on this subject, since the former tells us what justification is, and the latter describes its effects.(42).

Socinianism unsuccessfully attempted to combine two methods of justification, that is, justification by performing the works of the Law, and justification that was based on faith in Christ. This attempt was doomed to fail because the two methods are mutually exclusive. We may be justified either on account of our merit, or through divine Grace. In our case the former is out of the question
on account of our depravity, and so our only hope of salvation rests upon our complete trust in the divine Grace. This does not lead to unethical results, for justification by faith is invariably accompanied by sanctification:

"In the sanctification of believers, the Holy Ghost doth work in them, in their whole souls, their minds, wills, and affections, a gracious, supernatural habit, principle, and disposition of living unto God; wherein the substance or essence, the life and being, of holiness doth consist." (44).

This process is not completed in this world, where no man is absolutely freed from the taint of sin; but one day the task will be finished, and we shall be completely transformed unto the likeness of Christ. Then shall the purpose, which God had in mind when He created us, be fulfilled.

C.

In recent years the Augustinian-Thomistic doctrine of the fall and of original sin has to some extent been corroborated by psycho-analysts, many of whom admit that even children have inherited a tendency to sin, although it would be improper to say that they are born sinful. If sin be defined as "wilful rebellion against God", original sin does not really come under this category, because an evil tendency does not become actual sin until the will has been identified with it.

"By original sin there seems to be meant the solicitations of the lower nature conceived of proleptically as sin, because as present in the nature of a rational or moral being, they constitute the potentiality of the sin, which consists in such a being's yielding to them, despite the consciousness that to do so is wrong." (45).

Jung and Freud affirm that sin originates from a conflict of the instincts rather than from the will of the individual, and human experience confirms the view that there is in us a natural tendency towards evil. Some Hebrew rabbis held that it existed in Adam before he actually sinned. A theory similar to this has been
revived in recent years by N. P. Williams, and combined with Origen's conception, that the fall occurred in a pre-existent state. Williams supposes that the race-soul of humanity fell in the indefinitely remote past. From this standpoint man's first sin in this world would be the result of the fall rather than the fall itself. Such a theory raises many difficulties, and the real problem of explaining why a creature made by God turned against his Creator may, in the last resort, be insoluble. (46).

The existence of sin, however, is a well-established fact, and in view of God's omniscience and omnipotence it is reasonable to suppose that it exists by divine permission. Yet the Socinian doctrine, at first sight, seems to have a great deal in its favour; it appears logical to suppose that man, in spite of his sinfulness, can still obey the Creator, from whom he obtains favour in so far as he conforms to His demands. This was the real Socinian doctrine, for their declaration - that faith supplemented what was deficient in obedience - was merely a perverted form of the evangelical doctrine, a relic of Paulinism which had little bearing upon Socinian thought as a whole. "The chief thing is the obedience which gives proof of itself in fulfilment of the law." (47). Such teaching lays a simple and much-needed emphasis on the value of a high morality, and in practice it is useful because it makes a direct appeal to self-interest. Nevertheless, it is unacceptable because it does not explain the deep-rooted, universal fact of sin, which can be accounted for only by supposing that somehow the springs of human character have been tainted. Moreover, the social aspect of sin directs attention to another important principle, viz. the solidarity of the human race. The evil which exists in the world at any particular moment cannot be attributed merely to the wills of those who are then alive, for -
"back of these lies an inheritance of social evil, reaching back to the beginning of human history, and making itself felt in every age and in every relation of mankind." (48).

Perhaps Owen and the Calvinists exaggerated the case when they asserted that all men were totally depraved by nature, since man is depraved only in so far as he is left without the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and we have no right to say of any man that he is completely destitute of that guidance. His depravity only decreases in so far as the Spirit gains control; without Him man is a lost creature. Evil forces bear upon him from all directions - from his past inheritance and from his present environment, while he himself reveals a perpetual inclination to choose the ways of the ungodly. Hence it was right for Owen to say that Grace alone could redeem him.

The doctrine of original sin is counterbalanced by the doctrine of predestination, which affirms that the bond which unites the believer to revelation is created by God. All the emphasis is now placed on Christ's redeeming Work and on the miracle of faith wrought by the Holy Spirit. The individual gains value only in so far as God bestows His Mercy upon him. It is the vision of God's boundless love in Christ that supplies him with the motive which he requires to surrender himself completely to the divine service.

Owen duly emphasised these truths, although he does not seem to have grasped the real significance of the phrase, "predestination in Christ". The Calvinistic doctrine of predestination as presented in those days was marred by this defect. According to Owen, "predestination in Christ" simply meant that Christ was the principal Means through whom the Father worked out His purpose as expressed in the decree of election. But the New Testament
view appears to be - that the decree was from its inception in the mind of God determined by the divine character as revealed in Christ. Because of their failure to perceive this, Owen and the Calvinists regarded it as a purely arbitrary divine act which compelled human beings to conform with the will of God. Moreover, they reduced predestination into a rational conception, and so the Socinians were right in attempting to criticise such a doctrine along rational lines. The New Testament doctrine, however, when it affirms that salvation is solely due to divine Grace, does not express a rational idea but a revealed truth that harmonises with God's revealed character. It is not a declaration concerning God's arbitrary and omnipotent Will, but an expression of the transcendent quality of revelation. Although the divine Will is the Ultimate Cause of all that happens within the time-series, it does not itself belong to the temporal sequence, and therefore it does not belong to the sphere within which human reason operates. As its direct product faith is also inexplicable to human reason. Accordingly, when the doctrine of predestination states that faith is a divine gift, it does not express a rational conception. It affirms the revealed truth, that He who gave the Son to the world also gives the Holy Spirit to regenerate believers.

When Owen stated that the doctrine of predestination implied as its correlative the doctrine of reprobation, he must have regarded the predestinarian decree as a rational idea. Owen's conception of reprobation is not Scriptural, for the Scriptures do not affirm that the choice of some to partake of eternal life must imply the rejection of others. It is difficult to see how anyone who believes that God has reproved some persons from eternity can avoid attributing to God the responsibility for the
existence of sin, without which there could be no reprobation. Of one thing, however, we can be sure - that "the only thing that God does not purpose, and has not eternally purposed, is sin". (49).

It is true that Owen constantly asserts that man himself was responsible for introducing sin into the world, and yet he has no satisfactory answer to offer to the question: Why has He not taken adequate measures to eliminate it? His appeal to the existence of a supposedly arbitrary divine fiat - that God willed that some should remain in their sinfulness and suffer the penalties due to them - amounts to nothing less than a confession of failure to solve the problem, and the Socinians correctly rejected the doctrine of predestination when it was thus presented. They rightly indicated that it led to conclusions concerning the divine Nature that could not be imparted harmonised with the revelation imparted through Christ.

"It is hardly enough to say of Him that He elects to abandon some to their own courses, for surely it is as serious a reflection upon the Divine perfection, love, and justice, to say that He fails to care for some as to say that He predestines some to reprobation and damnation." (50).

Actually the fate of the non-elect has not been revealed to us.

Apart from this, however, Owen's Calvinistic theology harmonises well with the teaching of the New Testament. He clearly perceives that unless we know God in Christ we can only recognise Him as the God of Wrath who judges and condemns the whole world; but the believer knows that when He condemns He also regenerates. In predestination He -

"presses in and presses down upon our life in its actual relation to God, rejecting us in that relation, and, in rejecting us, chooses us for that relation for which we were destined according to the purpose that created us." (51).

Hence predestination does not deprive believers of their freedom. In His service do they find true freedom, when the consciousness of slavery to evil or non-moral forces and circumstances has been
exchanged for the consciousness of being in harmony with the Ultimate Ground of all things. When God effects this transformation He does not reduce human beings to the level of mere automata, for He acts in complete conformity with human self-determination. As the forces of heredity and environment largely determine our actions without destroying our freedom, so divine predestination "operates behind the will and creates free self-determination towards God and His service." (52). The elect still retain their personal and moral identity in that spiritual realm where true joy is experienced in the service of God.

There has been much curious speculation concerning the fate of those who have never been brought within reach of the Means of Grace provided by the Church. Like most Calvinists Owen firmly held that since the Church was the means employed by God to work out His purpose of election, salvation was only experienced by some of those who were able to partake of the benefits which it conferred. But although due stress should be laid upon the value of the Church and the worth of its ordinances and practices, one should beware of holding too narrow views concerning the operations of divine Grace. The Calvinistic belief in the divine Sovereignty also harmonises well with the idea that the Holy Spirit can regenerate even those who, on account of various circumstances, have never been brought into direct contact with the Gospel:

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." (John iii., 8).

In practice the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination produced much valuable fruit. It was a spur to action, for on its account men were prepared to go to all lengths in the service of God, believing that they were among the chosen number whose efforts
would be amply blessed. Since it caused men to be continually on the alert in their search for any signs of divine Grace in their character and conduct, it was a powerful incentive to self-examination and ethical improvement. It also led them to realize their obligations towards the Church as the means appointed by God to work out His eternal decree. Finally, it created a sense of aloofness from the world in its complete advocacy of the duty to give glory to none save God alone. Unfortunately, however, its influence was not wholly beneficial. Those who considered themselves to be of the number of God's elect tended to develop a spiritual pride and haughtiness that were quite incompatible with Christian humility. This is probably the chief reason why the spirit of intolerance was so prevalent during the period of Puritan supremacy.

The Socinians distinguished between two types of faith, the first being merely an intellectual assent to the doctrine proposed, and the second consisting of such an assent accompanied by good works. The word "faith" is frequently used in the former sense, but what the Reformers meant by "evangelical faith" was something far more vital than an intellectual grasp of revealed truth accompanied by obedience. By "faith" they meant complete trust in a Living Divine Person. Such a faith has a cognitive and a constitutive element. Not only must the mind assent to the truth, there must also be an act of will, of complete trust in the divine Mercy as revealed in Christ. Faith of this character inevitably bears ethical fruit, for the holiness and righteousness of Him in whom he trusts are progressively engendered within the believer. Moreover, faith of this character is the gift of the Holy Spirit, who enables us to have complete confidence in God by enabling us to perceive the magnificence of the divine love in Christ. What the
Mediator has done for us then impels us to believe in Him and to dedicate ourselves wholly to His service. Knowing that God in Christ has forgiven our sins we show our gratitude by exerting ourselves to the utmost to glorify His Name. Justification thus becomes the spring of lofty and heroic moral ventures. Christian ethics are the fruit of the Atonement. Our pride, alienation, and fear are conquered; in increasing measure we become morally united with Christ, being purified and sanctified by His Spirit. This was the great truth maintained by Owen when he stressed that sanctification presupposed justification. It is the Biblical truth - that God Himself took the initiative in the salvation of men, that salvation is purely of Grace. It is the fundamental message of the Gospel - a message which the Socinians failed to receive, as is proved by their assertion that sanctification precedes justification.

"When a man abandons all hope of self-righteousness, and turns to God in penitence and trust, to find in grateful dependence upon Him the spring and power of a new life, then, and not until then, is he conscious of the moral renewal whose full outworking will involve the complete transformation of the character unto the likeness of Jesus Christ. This is the truth for which the reformers contended with their distinction of justification and sanctification." (54).

Calvinistic theology tended towards an extreme individualism which was fostered by its conception of election. This is particularly true of the second generation of Calvinists, and the tendency is amply illustrated in Owen's treatises, especially in his devotional writings. This tendency should therefore be counter-balanced by using the word "reconciliation" to denote the effect of Christ's Mediation. It is well to remember that God has reconciled the world to Himself in Christ, and so the believer looks forward to the creation of a new Heaven and a new earth when Christ shall reign supreme. "Forgiveness need concern but two persons, while reconciliation may demand the reorganization
of the universe." (55).

FOOT-NOTES TO CHAPTER NINE (PART TWO).

5. Ibid, 333.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid. 335-338.
9. "Racovian Catechism", 323-324; Socinus, "Fragmenta de Justificatione", "Opera", 613. (Quoted by Owen, "Works", XII, 599.)
11. Cf. Schlichtingius, "De SS. Trinitate... adversus Miesnerum", 147; Socinus, "De Justificatione", "Opera", 603-604, 611. (Quoted by Owen, "Works", XII, 599.)
25. Ibid. 54.
26. In his controversy with the Arminians and Thomas Moore, Owen gave detailed consideration to this question - "the scope of the Atonement". He maintained the Calvinistic view against those who affirmed that Christ died for all men, and that every man could be saved if he truly believed in Him. This question was much debated between the Dutch Calvinists and Remonstrants of the 17th century; Cf. Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History", V, 444-445.
27. "Of the Death of Christ, and of Justification" (1655), "Works", XII, 602, 607, 615.
42. "Vindiciae Evangelicae", "Works", XII., 575.
43. Ibid., 561-562.
50. Curtis, Article on "Confessions" (E.R.E.), Section 14. Section 16 contains an able summary of Calvinistic views on predestination.
A cursory study of the "Racovian Catechism" will reveal that the old Socinians had but slight interest in the priestly and kingly offices of Christ: only a small space was allotted to the discussion of these questions because the lengthy section on His prophetic office included everything which they actually desired to say concerning the Saviour's Work. Being unprepared to eliminate them completely, however, they sought to prove that He did not exercise these functions while He was on earth.

Cunningham has indicated how the Socinians granted that He fulfilled the duties of a Priest "in some vague and indefinite sense" after His ascension. But they would not believe that He performed the duties of a Priest while He was on earth, although the "Racovian Catechism" admitted that since He then prayed for others and offered His blood for human sins, He might have been a Priest in a modified and limited sense. They all agreed that He could not have offered a "perfect oblation" before His resurrection from the dead. His functions as a Priest consisted in offering to the Father an acceptable offering for human sins, and interceding for ever on behalf of sinners, - tasks which He could not perform before He was given the new and incorruptible body of the resurrection. The fact that our High Priest performs His duties for ever, demands that His body should be immortal; He did not possess an immortal body before the resurrection, and so He could not then have been our High Priest. Moreover, He could not have been our High Priest in the fullest sense before He had tasted death. He had to be made "like unto His brethren" to succour those "that are
tempted" and sympathise with human infirmities. In addition, one ought to bear in mind that only in the Heavenly Tabernacle was it possible to offer a perfect expiatory Sacrifice. Hence Biddle contends that this office was bestowed upon Him by the Father after His entrance into Heaven. (2). It was therefore contended that He must have entered into the Heavenly Tabernacle at some point between His death and the time when He seated Himself at the right hand of the Father. On account of His Offering He was given the power "of delivering us for ever from our sins and the punishment of them; which is meant by His being seated at the right hand of the Majesty." (3). His priestly and kingly offices are indeed so closely related that one may cogently argue, since He could not be a King before His ascension, neither could He then have been a Priest:

"Since He evidently did not rule when He suffered death, it can therefore be said, because the priestly office of that man was almost the same as His Kingship, that that death appeared to be the commencement or the preparation for administering the Priesthood thereafter in Heaven." (4).

Christ's priestly work consists mainly in intercession, which does not imply that He continually offers prayers to God on behalf of sinners, - which would evidently be inconsistent with His Kingship, - but that His actions as High Priest "powerfully impel God to grant the remission of sins, and are the most efficacious means of our reconciliation". On account of His offering and obedience the Father has willed henceforth to perform all things at the solicitations of Christ. (5). Through His priestly work Christ has provided for the expiation of all sins, their guilt and their penalties; He can even remove eternal penalties, and His Sacrifice "has the power of sanctifying men for ever to God". It is therefore evident that His Oblation was in every respect superior to the sacrifices of the Old Covenant, which could only be the means of expiating the sins of infirmity and ignorance, and of removing temporal penalties,
While actually they were powerless to extricate the sinner from his sins because they could not influence his mind. (6). But Christ perpetually intercedes before God on our behalf, having ensured for us eternal redemption and deliverance from all sins through the Sacrifice which He offered in the Heavenly Tabernacle.

Owen draws attention to the clear distinction that ought to be drawn between Christ's priestly office on the one hand and His prophetic and kingly offices on the other, - the former being directed towards God, the latter towards the Church:

"As a priest, He acts with God in our name and on our behalf; as a king and a prophet, He acts towards us in the name and authority of God". (7).

In His priestly capacity He makes Atonement for human sins, satisfies the divine Justice, reconciles the Father to us, and so makes it possible for us to be saved. But indirectly His priestly work also influences men, who are thereby justified and pardoned, sanctified and purified. (8). He derived His priestly authority from the Eternal Covenant which existed between Him and the Father, according to which the Father ordained that He should be the High Priest of the Church, while He Himself yielded voluntary obedience. (9). Although sin broke the friendship which once existed between God and man, Christ, by virtue of His oblation and intercession, once more restores God's chosen people into the divine fellowship.

Scripture contains ample proof that Christ possesses all the qualities of a Priest. The Socinians, by affirming that His Priesthood should be interpreted metaphorically, made Him inferior to Aaron, whom they granted was a High Priest in a real sense. In "Hebrews" a parallel is drawn between the Aaronic Priesthood and that of Christ in order to show that the Saviour possesses all the necessary qualities of a Priest, - that He was taken from among men and ordained to fulfil
the divine purpose, and that He offered gifts and sacrifices for sins. (10). These are the essential properties of a Priest, and they all belonged to Christ. Moreover His Oblation was also a real Sacrifice. Christ Himself, in virtue of His divine Nature, was the chief Agent in the task of offering it, but His human nature had a share in it because as a man He volunteered to do the Will of the Father. The voluntary quality of Christ's Sacrifice was indeed of supreme importance, since no sacrifice is acceptable unless it comes from a free and willing mind. Christ's own Offering was in the highest degree satisfactory because it was the effect of His compassion towards sinners, and it was for this reason that the Father regarded it as an adequate Atonement for human sins. (11). The Sacrifice consisted of His human nature, His soul and His body, which He Himself had consecrated and sanctified for this purpose. It may therefore be said that "He makes the Atonement actively, as the Priest; Himself passively as the Sacrifice". (12). The Sacrifice was accompanied by the shedding of blood, and was offered on the altar of Christ's divine Nature, - the Cross as such having no direct bearing on the sacrificial character of His death:

"The Deity of Christ, that supported, bore up, and sanctified the human nature as offered, was the altar, and the cross was but an instrument of the cruelty of man, that taketh place in the death of Christ as it was a penalty, but hath no place in it as a sacrifice." (13).

Owen also urges that He was the High Priest of the Church before His incarnation and during His life on earth, as well as in His present exalted position, and that all the Socinian arguments against believing Him to be a Priest during His historical life, designed as they were to prepare the way for repudiating the doctrine of the Atonement, rest on no valid considerations whatsoever. (14). Even death itself could not prevent Him from performing His sacerdotal functions:
"Though the life of Christ was intercepted three days, yet His Person was never dissolved as to the administration of His office of Priesthood". (15).

The Socinians wrongly supposed that He entered the Heavenly Sanctuary to offer the Sacrifice, whereas the Sacrifice had already been offered by Him once for all while He was on earth. The character of His priestly Work during the days of His flesh is described by Owen in the following words:

"The exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ whilst He was upon the earth consisted in this, to bear the punishment due to our sins, to make atonement with God, by undergoing His wrath, and reconciling Him to sinners upon the satisfaction made to His justice: therefore cannot these things be denied without damnable error." (16).

The Sacrifice included the offering of His body and the shedding of blood; and these necessary elements demanded that Christ's body at the time when it was offered should be liable to death. It is therefore evident that it was offered before the Resurrection, when He was clothed with an immortal body. But since the One who offered the Sacrifice was a Priest, it is established beyond any doubt that Christ was a Priest before His crucifixion. (17). Finally, it should be noted that His heavenly intercession on behalf of His people presupposes that the Sacrifice had been offered.

Although the daily sacrifices offered by Jewish priests ought to be regarded as "types" or "shadows" of Christ's perfect Oblation, yet they were actually inferior to it in all respects. Christ's Sacrifice was much more intimately related to His own Person than the ancient sacrifices were to the Jewish priests, and its effects upon those for whom it was offered was far greater than theirs. While the Jewish sacrifices were so inadequate as to demand constant repetition, "His one offering perfectly put an end to... the difference between God and us upon the account of sin." (18).

The Jewish high priests were mortal, and as successive generations
passed by their place was occupied by others; but Christ, the High
Priest of the New Covenant, is immortal, and He abides in His office
that He may "intercede for us for ever". (19).

Above all, it should be emphasised that without faith in
His Divinity we can derive no benefit from all His sacerdotal
activities. Christ's Sacrifice was accepted by the Father as an
Atonement for human sin, even though what was offered (His human
nature) was but finite; it derived its worth from the infinite
value of Him who offered it. (20). Since the Father attributed so
much value to the Sacrifice, it became the foundation of Christ's
Intercession on our behalf in Heaven, whereby our salvation is
completed. Christ's fervent prayers on behalf of His followers,
says Owen, indubitably prove that He was their Advocate while He
lived on earth, but to us it is a great consolation to know that He
still continues to intercede on our behalf, - beseeching the Father
that our sins may be pardoned in virtue of His Oblation, and that
we, by obtaining supplies of new Grace, may be progressively
sanctified by the Holy Spirit. (21). Yet we should beware of supposing
that Intercession is His sole priestly occupation; for us the Sacrific-
ice is equal in value to His Intercession, as it is the foundation,
the only ground on which we may hope for remission of sins. The
perfection of His Oblation makes it unnecessary for us to offer
other sacrifices. The papists have poured contempt upon it by
instituting the Mass, a sacrifice that must be offered daily,
thereby implying that Christ's own Sacrifice was imperfect and
inadequate, and drawing men's attention from what happened once for
all upon the Cross to what happens every day before their eyes. They
have indeed failed to realise that "the sacrifice of Christ without
His passion, His offering without suffering, evacuates both the
one and the other". (22). Christ alone is our High Priest;
only His Sacrifice can satisfy the divine Justice and reconcile Him to us. And yet through the Covenant of Grace the elect are united with Christ; they become members of His body, so that they partake of whatever He has done for them. Thus we may speak of "the priesthood of all believers". As Christ, our High Priest, can enter into the holy presence of God, so the elect are able to draw near to the Father in Christ:

"We have an interest in this appellation of priests by virtue of our union with Christ. Being one with our high priest, we also are priests." (23)

It is only in the Epistle to the Hebrews that the title of "Priest" or "High Priest" is explicitly attributed in Scripture to Jesus Christ, but the idea that man needs a Priest to represent him before the Father harmonises well with the whole teaching of the New Testament. "Hebrews" indicates how human needs, which under the Old Covenant were only partially satisfied through the ministrations of human priests, were completely met and fulfilled by the mediatory activities of Christ; how the Sacrifice of Him who is the true High Priest after the order of Melchisedek was in all respects superior to the Old Covenant offerings. The priests of Judaism were sinful and mortal, their sacrifices were inadequate and required to be constantly repeated, and the access which they obtained to the Father's presence was only of a temporary character, whereas Christ offered a spiritual Sacrifice that provided an adequate Atonement for all the sins of men, who thereby are able to experience that complete salvation which consists in abiding fellowship with God. (24). All these truths were indicated by Owen, who realised also that the ancient Jewish rites should still be regarded as "types" of Christ's perfect Atonement, since they expressed the human consciousness of the need for an objective ground of confidence that
our sins have been forgiven, and of the conviction that communion with God cannot be attained without cost and suffering.

Owen's protest against the Socinian doctrine was chiefly based on his belief that Christ's Divinity was the deep underlying fact that gave effectiveness to His priestly activities. He truly interpreted the doctrine of the New Testament: that Christ is able to bring human beings into the presence of God because He Himself is divine. Equally true and necessary, however, was his emphasis on His Humanity, - that He is our Representative before the Father because He had identified Himself with us, because like ourselves He partook of human flesh, was tempted in the world, learned obedience through suffering, and even tasted death. Apart from His sinlessness He was like us in all things, so that in Him it is possible for us to see ourselves as we ought to be and as we can be by the aid of His Grace.

Owen also rightly contended that He was our High Priest even while He lived on earth. The controversy between him and the Socinians on this question mostly revolved around their varying interpretations of the parallel drawn in "Hebrews" between Judaic ritual and Christ's atoning Work, their different conceptions of what conditions had to be fulfilled before He could be our immortal Priest, and their diverging views of what actually occurred in the Heavenly Tabernacle. The Socinians argued that since human priests already existed on earth, it would have been superfluous for Christ as a man to ministrate further to our needs in this fashion before His death, whereas Owen contended that His Priesthood belonged to an entirely different order, so that there was no force in the Socinian argument. The Socinians maintained that He could not be a true Priest until He had received an immortal body through the Resurrection, while Owen held that He was an immortal Priest during His earthly life.
because He was essentially divine. While the Socinians said that He offered the Sacrifice in the Heavenly Tabernacle, Owen affirmed that it was offered once for all on Calvary, and that it was merely presented by Him on **Sacrifice** in Heaven.

There can be no doubt that Owen was right when he urged that Christ presented a true Sacrifice to God on behalf of sinners during the days of His flesh; but the stress laid by him on the details associated with His death as proof of this must be considered as unconvincing and even misleading. This is true, for instance, of his repeated affirmations that it was absolutely necessary for His blood to be shed before the Sacrifice could be valid. To draw attention to these details may prevent one from realising that the Sacrifice which He offered was spiritual in its nature. Moreover, he does not regard His obedience throughout the whole of His earthly life as constituting an essential part of the Sacrifice; for Owen it was merely a preparatory process, whereby He sanctified Himself to be the Victim. He confined the use of the term "Sacrifice" to the actual death on the Cross instead of regarding it as the crowning act of the whole sacrificial process. The Socinians perceived this more clearly than Owen, and this was the reason why they said that His Priesthood should be understood metaphorically. Nevertheless, in spite of all these literalistic tendencies which led Owen to seek in the Saviour's death a parallel for all the details which were included in the definition of a sacrifice of Atonement in the Jewish ceremonial Law, yet it must be admitted that he never lost sight of the value attached to the Saviour's Work because of its voluntary character. In the Old Testament the term "blood" was used to describe the seat of life, and if it is so understood and spiritually interpreted, it may be
regarded by the believer as standing for everything which Christ means to Him as the ultimate Source of spiritual energy in His redemptive activities. Christ's whole life and work, as well as His passion, form an integral part of those activities. In other words, they constitute a part of His Offering. Owen does not appear to have fully realised that -

"the contrast between the Levitical sacrifices and the sacrifice of Christ...does not consist in this, that in the former case animal victims are slain, in the latter a victim of pre-eminent dignity, but in the circumstance that in the one case the offering is a material, in the other a spiritual oblation."(25).

Christ's priestly functions in His exalted state pre-suppose His achievements as a Priest while He lived on earth, for it was with and through what He then wrought that He entered into the divine presence. Owen agreed with the Socinians that only in Heaven was it possible for Him to be our High Priest in the fullest sense, although he would not have endorsed Milligan's statement that -

"no truth appears more clearly than that neither the pre-existent nor the incarnate Sonship of our Lord (although both are proceeded on and implied), but His Sonship in His now glorified condition constitutes Him to be our High Priest".(26).

He was anxious to press home the truth that His priestly Work in Heaven was a continuation of His priestly activities on earth, and the need for this immediately becomes evident to him who realises that without the latter the former would be devoid of content. The superiority of his doctrine to that of the Socinians is well expressed by Cunningham in the following passage, which deserves to be quoted:-

"When men's deliverance, or their possession of spiritual blessings, is ascribed, in general, to the intercession of Christ, without being accompanied with an exposition of His vicarious sacrifice and satisfaction, as the ground or basis on which it rests, no more definite meaning can be attached to it than merely that of using some influence, in order to procure for men what they need from God. But when His vicarious sacrifice and satisfaction are first asserted as the great leading department
of the work which He wrought for the salvation of sinners, and His intercession is then introduced as following this, and based upon it, we escape from this vague generality, and are warranted and enabled to represent His intercession as implying that He pleads with God, in behalf of men, and in order to obtain for them the forgiveness of their sins, this most relevant and weighty consideration, viz. that He has suffered in their room, that He has endured in their stead the whole penalty which their sins had deserved."(27).

Christ lived and died in order that He might bring men to God, that through Him they might confidently approach the Father, and be transformed unto His likeness. By the aid of His Grace believers, in various degrees, are enabled to offer the sacrifice of obedience, for "self-sacrifice is the ritual of the lives that He moulds".(28). As the High Priest He establishes a society of priests who are ruled by the principle of love, - a society in which every member bears his neighbour's need and spends himself in the effort to bring salvation to others.

B.

All the Socinians believed that Christ was inaugurated into His kingly office at the time of His ascension, when the Father gave Him authority in Heaven and upon earth to govern, protect, and save believers.(28). They held that He neither raised Himself from the dead nor attained to this position of absolute supremacy through His own efforts, but that it was the Father who caused His material and mortal body to become "incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and spiritual" and gave Him supreme authority. His Kingship was the Father's gift, and it was conferred upon Him as a reward for His perfect obedience. Yet it is also true that His exaltation was due to His previous humiliation, that He became King, invested with the same judiciary power as the Father Himself, and possessing all the wisdom that was required to judge men and to reward or punish them according to their deserts, because He had been the Son of Man.(29). His Sovereignty is
pre-eminently spiritual in character: He renders spiritual succour to believers and inflicts spiritual punishment on the disobedient. But in His kingly capacity He also gives physical aid to the distressed and imposes corporeal penalties on offenders. Moreover, His authority extends over the Angels; good Angels are employed by Him to enlarge His Kingdom and to assist the faithful according to their needs, while He uses bad Angels to punish His enemies or to regulate their behaviour. His rule extends over the visible and invisible Church, over those who hold and profess saving doctrine and over the ones who "truly confide in Christ and obey Him, and are, therefore, in the most perfect sense, His body." (30).

Owen's criticism of the Socinian doctrine of Christ's Kingship is chiefly based on the thought that the Socinian Christ could not be the King of the Christian Church because He was not essentially divine, - a thought which is evidently akin to Luther's statement - that the regnum Christi is the direct test of His Godhead. Only a Person who possessed all divine properties and excellencies could fulfil the functions ascribed by Scripture to the Saviour in His kingly capacity, and it would have been a great catastrophe for the Church if God, as the supreme Sovereign, had made a human being, whose direct influence, not be felt anywhere except where he himself was personally present, her Lord and King. But Christ is not a creature; He is divine by nature, and as King He exercises all His divine properties. He does not rule by means of precepts which He uttered during the days of His flesh, and His authority is not merely exercised through certain institutions and offices which He then appointed; His Kingship implies real and absolute dominion over the whole creation, including the innermost thoughts and feelings of mankind. So direct are His actions that His influence is
immediately felt by those who come under His sway. He who denies His Divinity deprives Him of His Kingship and destroys the foundation of our religion:

"Ascribe therefore unto the Lord Christ, in the exercise of His kingly office, only a moral power, operative by rules and laws, with the help of external instruments - deprive Him of omnipresence and omniscience, with infinite divine power and virtue to be acted at His pleasure in and over the whole creation - and you raise the foundation of all Christian faith and hope to the ground." (32).

As the King of His Church He infuses Grace and Holiness into His people, whence they derive manifold blessings and virtues, which include freedom, safety from violence and deceit, material prosperity, inward peace, love of the brethren, a real desire for the progress of Christ's Kingdom, and an eternal reward in Heaven. (33).

This principle is fundamental: Christ is our King because He is divine. Since He was divine in His pre-existent state as well as during His historical existence and in His status exaltationis, He must have occupied this office during the three stages. Hence the Socinians were in error when they refused to Him the title of King while He lived on earth. This is corroborated by Scripture, where it is clearly stated that His disciples recognised Him as their King during the days of His flesh. Apart from this, Thomas, for instance, would not have greeted Him then as His Lord and God. (John xx., 28). The Ascension was in reality only the occasion when His true glory was manifested. He was actually the King and Lord of glory when He was crucified.

The Socinians also failed to draw an adequate distinction between His Kingship and His Priesthood. They said that as a Priest He was willing to help His people, and that as a King He was able to do so; thus they implied that as a King He had no desire to relieve His people. Owen therefore asks:
"Is this enough for a king among men, that he is able to relieve his subjects, though he be not willing? Or is not this a proper description of a wicked tyrant?"

This is the proper way to distinguish them: as a Priest He procures salvation for us, and as a King He applies salvation to us. (34).

Owen, however, believed like the Socinians that Christ's Sovereignty was primarily spiritual in character. Within the circle of Calvinism before its contact with Socinianism, the belief became current that Christ was King merely because He was the Lawgiver of the Church as a visible, organised, and worshipping community, - a belief which Ritschl traces to -

"The special conditions under which the congregations of Dutch and English exiles were forced to dispense with the support of the State, and the English exiles Puritans, like the Scots, had to effect the formation of a Reformed Church in conflict with the civil power." (35).

This was a departure from the views of Luther and Calvin, and it led men to adopt rigid views concerning Church government and worship, since they believed that Christ as the Head of the Church had laid down certain inflexible rules concerning ecclesiastical polity. After their contact with Socinianism, however, the Continental Calvinists showed more sympathy towards the view that the Lordship of Christ is spiritual in its nature; and Owen himself laid due stress on this without renouncing the idea that He is also the Ruler of the Church as an organised community. He affirms that this office has an external and an internal aspect:

"That supreme authority which, for their everlasting good, He useth towards them, whereof in general there be two acts: first, internal and spiritual, in converting their souls unto Him, making them unto Himself a willing, obedient, persevering people; secondly, external and ecclesiastical, in giving perfect laws and rules for their government, as gathered into holy societies under Him."

Towards His enemies His kingly acts are also twofold:

"First, internal, by the mighty working of His Word, and the
spirit of bondage upon their hearts, convincing, amazing, terrify­ing their consciences, hardening their spirits for ruin; secondly, external, in judgments and vengeance, which oftentimes He beginneth in this life, and will continue unto eternity."(36).

He was an ardent believer in the 'jure divino' character of Congregationalism, and it may be suggested that his familiarity with the writings of the Socinians influenced him in any way to lay more stress upon Christ's spiritual Kingship than upon His Lordship over the Church as an organised and visible system; but in his case this can hardly be true inasmuch as he attributes the prevalent tendency to regard Christ's Kingship in the latter sense alone to disbelief in the Divinity of His Person. Moreover, he never gave credit to the Socinians for their spiritual ideas of Christ's Lordship, and he does not appear to have noticed that such views were held by the ones who were most vehement in their denials of the Saviour's essential Divinity, as the following paragraph shows:–

"Some seem to imagine, that the kingly power of Christ towards the Church consists only in external rule by the Gospel and the laws thereof, requiring obedience unto the officers and rulers that He hath appointed therein. It is true, that this also belongs unto His kingly power and rule; but to suppose that it consisteth solely therein, is an ebullition from the poisonous fountain of the denial of His divine Person."(37).

This element in Owen's thought deserves particular attention, as Ritschl indicates:

"It is well worth noting that a theologian so influential as John Owen refuses to regard as exhaustive this reference of Christ's Kingship to the eternal supremacy of the Gospel, as seen in the obedience given to Church officers. He not only recognises that thereby injury is done to the significance of Christ's Divine nature as the basis of His dominion over the world, but, in the spirit of Luther and Calvin, he emphasises the internal and spiritual character of Christ's dominion, as consisting in that rule over souls which alone gives obedience to Christ its worth."(38).

It has already been noted that Christ's prophetic and priestly functions move in opposite directions; as a Prophet He reveals God to man, and as a Priest He brings men to God. Since the days of the Reformation Protestant theologians have as a rule attributed to
a third office, viz. that of a King. Ritschl, however, made a valuable contribution to theology when he pointed out the difficulty of ascribing to the kingly office a separate content of its own. Whenever the theologians of Owen's day attempted to describe how his kingly authority was exercised in the process of human salvation, they merely reiterated what had already been asserted when they dealt with the other offices. This is due to the fact that His spiritual supremacy is wholly expressed through His prophetic and priestly work. As Prophet and as Priest He is supreme; no one can claim equality with Him. (39). The Socinian tended to confuse His Kingship with His Priesthood, whilst Owen thought that His Kingship was more closely related to His prophetic office, these two being directed towards men and the Priesthood towards God; but the truth is - that He expresses His kingly authority through both His prophetic and His priestly activities.

Throughout his controversial writings Owen returns to his basic assumption, that Christ could not have performed the functions attached to any of these offices if He were not divine by nature. He goes farther than this when he affirms that we recognise Him as our Prophet, Priest, and King, because He is essentially divine. He implies this, for instance, in the following paragraph: -

"We can have no due consideration of the offices of Christ, can receive no benefit by them, nor perform any act of duty with respect unto them, or any of them, unless faith in His divine person be actually exercised as the foundation of the whole. For that is it whence all their glory, power, and efficacy are derived." (40).

But this argument should undergo a logical reversal: we actually recognise Him to be divine because first of all we have realised that He is our Prophet, Priest, and King. He is the Prophet of the Church because in Him God is revealed to us; He is our High Priest because He represents us before the Father and brings us near to Him; and He is our King because He exercises absolute authority in
performing His prophetic and priestly work. Only those who know Him as their Prophet, Priest, and King, have the right to proclaim Him to be truly divine.

During His historical life Christ was the hidden King. His real glory could only be perceived through the veil of His Humanity by those who had faith. Reflections of that glory, however, did break through that veil, so that he who reads the Gospel records attentively will be impressed by His majestic bearing as a man, His personal independence, His mastery of temptation, His steadfast loyalty to the Father, His untroubled consciousness of communion with God, the unexampled worth of His life, teaching, and work, and His inimitable ability to raise human beings from their bondage to sin and death to an incomparably higher sphere of life and activity. Through His miracles He reveals His authority as Creator, and through His power to forgive He manifests His absolute authority over the moral and spiritual aspects of human life. Above all, His Cross ought to be regarded as the sign of His final triumph over the forces of darkness. The Mediator is also our King, who rules His community through His Word, and when His Sovereignty shall be completely established, anarchy and rebellion against the rule of God will be finally annihilated. But as Brunner indicates, in the meantime -

"that which holds together the people of God, that which founds the community, that which summons to obedience, that which creates the power to obey, is the Word, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is attested as God's Word by the Holy Spirit, speaks to us, comforteth, judges, warns us, and, as something real and effective, shows us the way. This is the manner in which the King rules over us, until His coming 'in power'." (41).
FOOT-NOTES TO CHAPTER TEN (PART TWO).

1. Cunninghara, "Historical Theology", II., 177.
6. Ibid., 351-353.
7. "Pneumatologia; or, A Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit" (1674), "Works", III., 629.
8. Ibid., 629-630, 440-441; "Of Communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" (1657), "Works", II., 167; "A Brief Declaration and Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity" (1669), "Works", II., 422.
9. "Two Short Catechisms: wherein the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ are unfolded and explained" (1645), "Works", I., 481.
12. Ibid., 176-177; "Vindiciae Evangelicae", "Works", XII., 430.
13. Ibid., 433. But in an earlier work Owen had described Christ's Oblation as "the offering up of Himself upon the altar of the Cross"."Two Short Catechisms", "Works", I., 481.
15. Ibid., 406.
20. Ibid., 431-432.
32. Vide Ritschl, "Justification and Reconciliation", 423.
37. "Two Short Catechisms", "Works", I., 480; Cf. "The Excellency of Christ" (Sermon preached at Stadham, June 7, 1674), "Works", IX., 475.
Chapter 11. - CONCLUSION.

A.

During Owen’s lifetime the spontaneity of early Protestantism was disappearing, dislodged by a new kind of Scholasticism which regarded the traditional interpretations of Scripture as binding. Owen was so much influenced by this that his thought on the whole shows little signs of originality. Believing that the task of the theologian was to expound revealed Truth and to guard it from doctrinal corruptions, he affirmed that all efforts to create novel doctrines were due to personal selfishness and pride, and that Christianity should on no account be tarnished by human traditions or by human inventions. Through Scripture God has once for all revealed to man His message, and this is the only criterion whereby we can distinguish Christian truth from dogmatic error. The authority of the OEcumenical Creeds should be recognised because they interpret Scripture correctly, and because they are useful and necessary bulwarks against the advance of heresy. Moreover, God has in the past raised great men, theologians like Augustine and Calvin, who have done most valuable work through their expositions of the biblical message, and to allow oneself to be guided in one’s search for Truth by their opinions, and by the basic convictions of Christians in all generations, is therefore highly commendable. Christian theologians ought to tread along the highway prepared for them by their predecessors; if they depart from it they do so at their own peril. Amidst the tumultuous events and the ephemeral religious movements of the seventeenth century he solemnly warns his readers thus:

"Take heed of the snare of Satan in affecting eminency by singularity. It is good to strive to excel and to go before one another in knowledge and in light, as in holiness and obedience. To do this in the road is difficult." (1).
He was above all a biblical theologian, one of the last great exponents of the doctrine of verbal inspiration, - a doctrine which unfortunately led him to regard the Old Testament as on a par with the New, and caused him to employ Scriptural texts in a manner that sounds strange to one who is acquainted with modern biblical Criticism. In his day, however, it provided the young Nonconformist Churches with a visible and infallible Authority on matters of faith, a strong fortification amidst the welter of current circumstances.

But he fully accepted the fundamental truth, that God's Word comes to man through the Scriptures, which provide the ultimate standard for evaluating doctrines. Nevertheless, the Socinian protest against the tendency of 'orthodox' theology to introduce philosophical principles into its scheme of thought could with some justification be applied to him. For instance, he conceived of God, in the first place, as an unlimited Being who could only be negatively defined, apparently without realising that through the Scriptures He has revealed Himself as a Person who speaks and acts and has a definite character. Scholastic philosophy, however, did not really influence his theology to any appreciable extent, for he merely employed its conceptions in an effort to express the Scriptural truth that He was essentially different from man. Against the Socinians he maintained that God was not affected by fleeting passions as we are, and in opposition to the Quakers, who claimed that He could be discovered in the depths of their own hearts, he affirmed that He belonged to another realm, that He is the transcendent One who broke across the flow of nature and of history to reveal Himself.

He had no valid reasons for attempting to formulate a doctrine of God apart from divine Revelation. He ought to have set
forth from his belief in Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son of God, as the Father's supreme revelation of His Will and Character, and then it would have been natural for him to express his conviction that He who thus spoke in Christ is the Ultimate Reality. Instead of this he attempted to draw certain conclusions concerning the Nature and Being of God by deduction from a priori premisses, and when he sought to add to these the facts revealed in the Scriptures, he was finally left with a number of conclusions that had no organic relationship with one another. Moreover, his conception of divine "immutability" - that the divine life is absolutely unchangeable - can hardly be said to harmonise with Christian faith and experience. When God is said to be immutable one ought not to suppose that His life is entirely static: such a statement simply implies that He preserves His self-identity, His character as revealed in Christ, throughout all changes in the world-process.

He firmly opposed the Socinian idea of God as 'Absolute Will', maintaining that although He was omnipotent He could not act contrary to His own nature. Since God is essentially good, He cannot do evil; since He is by nature just He cannot be unjust. He does not act justly (as the Socinians supposed) because He wills to be just. He expresses His own eternal character through His actions. He is omnipotent in the sense that nothing can prevent Him from realising the end He has in view. In Heaven and upon earth His power is all-embracing. Owen deserves high praise for the manner in which He defended the Christian doctrine of God against the Socinian notion of Him as an irresponsible Tyrant.

As a Calvinist he also believed that God possessed absolute omniscience, i.e., complete knowledge of all past, present, and future events. Hence he disagreed with the Socinians who believed that
since man was a free agent, no one, not even God, could foreknow his actions. This question still remains open for debate; but Owen rightly affirmed that one must choose between believing in absolute predestination and absolute foreknowledge, or in human autonomy and a limited divine cognition.

The chief defect in Owen's theology was the fact that he regarded God as being primarily the embodiment of the Moral Law. He believed that He was bound by His own Nature to punish sin and to uphold Nature, but that He possessed no inherent quality that compelled Him to be merciful. Thus he deemed the most Christlike acts of God to be the most arbitrary. It was unfortunate that his admission, that all the divine properties were in the last resort identical both with one another and with the divine essence, did not have more influence on his theology. In reality he regarded divine Justice and Divine Mercy as opposed to each other, maintaining that the former demanded an Atonement, and that the latter provided it. The New Testament, on the other hand, affirms that God's indignation against sin arises out of His love for man. Divine Justice is an aspect of the divine Love.

When he deals with the doctrine of the Trinity he convincingly shows that the main criticism offered by the Socinians was only valid against a polytheistic doctrine which affirms the existence of a plurality of world-grounds. The traditional doctrine, as Owen urged, expresses the fundamental truths contained in the Christian Gospel: that God has revealed Himself in Christ, and that He is continually active in the Church as the Holy Spirit. His terminology may be old-fashioned, his distinction between "essence" and "person", though hallowed by tradition, may be repudiated, but the doctrine itself must in essence be retained as the most satisfactory
expression of Christian faith and experience.

Owen's best passages are those which dwell on the unique glory and majesty of the Redeemer, to whom he unreservedly ascribes "everything that is good, useful, amiable, desirable, here or unto eternity." (2). Jesus Christ, he says, is one with the Father, being eternally pre-existent and possessing all divine properties. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, and the worthy object of our adoration. Yet for our sakes He humiliated Himself by taking human flesh. His divine Person fully satisfies all the religious demands of the soul. Since He has come from the bosom of the Father the revelation imparted by Him has absolute and final authority, and He possesses the necessary power to raise us from our sinful degradation. God's eternal Son has stooped to save humanity: He lived among men, suffered as they suffered, and was restored through the Resurrection and Ascension to that exalted state where His real supremacy and authority are manifest to all believers. Through Him alone can sinners be redeemed.

His earthly life, His birth, mission, resurrection, and exaltation, cannot be perceived in their correct perspective unless one believes in His Divinity. Since the Socinians did not accept this basic truth they wrongly regarded the events associated with His historical life as stages in the movement of a creature towards 'divinity'! Those events were really only the outward manifestations of His inherent glory - rays of divine light that shone through the veil of His humanity. So long as Owen confined himself to the task of expressing the significance of Christ to the believer his doctrine still remains valid; but when he tried to explain the mystery of His Person he was no more successful than his contemporaries were. In those times 'orthodox' theologians usually believed that
"Divinity" and "Humanity" were separate ontological entities, mysteriously united in the Redeemer's Person. Faith, however, needs only to affirm her conviction that Jesus Christ is both God and man—that while He is truly divine He also possesses all the attributes of a true human being. Owen's devotional spirit frequently overcomes his scholasticism as he contemplates the wonderful and glorious person of his Saviour. In the following characteristic passage he expresses his deep yearning for the time when he will be able to enjoy His companionship without hindrance for ever:

"We can long for it, pant after it, and have some foretastes of it, - namely, of that state and season wherein our whole souls, in all their powers and faculties, shall constantly, inseparably, eternally cleave by love unto whole Christ, in the sight of the glory of His person and grace, until they are watered, dissolved, and inebriated in the waters of life and the rivers of pleasure that are above for evermore. So must we speak of the things which we adore, which we love, which we long for, which we have some foretastes of in sweetess ineffable, which yet we cannot comprehend." (3).

There can be no doubt that Owen's whole theology is too much under the influence of his conception of Revelation as something static and unchangeable - a notion that corresponds to his idea of divine immutability. He affirms, for instance, that the Law was revealed in all its perfection through Moses, whereas it has now been established that it came into being as man's ethical perceptions grew and developed during a long period which culminated in the coming of Christ. The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount therefore moves on a far higher plane than that of Moses. Hence Owen's statement - that the Sermon on the Mount is merely a commentary on the Mosaic legislation - is erroneous and misleading. Moreover, he shows a perpetual inclination to read the message of the Gospel into the words of the Old Testament. His reasons for doing this have already been discussed, but such a practice irritates one who is but slightly acquainted with Biblical Criticism.
He perceived, however, that divine Revelation was a unity, and that its unity proceeded from the fact that it was controlled and directed from beginning to end by the Father's Will. From his point of view he could do much more justice than the Socinians to the truth that the Old and the New Testaments were inseparably and organically connected, although the Socinians perceived more clearly than he did that the New Testament was superior to the Old. In these days it is generally recognised that Revelation is by nature progressive. God has imparted to various generations as much Truth as they were capable of receiving, so that the Old Testament derives its value from the testimony it bears to the fact that Christ is coming; the respective worth of its contents can only be gauged in the light of the fuller Revelation that came in Christ. It is the dawn which points to the coming day.

Owen frequently stressed that Christ in His own Person and Work is the great Prophet of the Christian Church. In this capacity He reveals the divine Nature and Will to man, and gives sinners power and strength to conform with the divine demands. The absolute and final authority of this Revelation is derived from the fact that He belongs to the divine side of Reality. Hence he ridiculed (with good cause) the unconvincing attempts made by the Socinians to show why Jesus, as a mere man, could be the instrument for conveying this Revelation.

He then proceeds to explain that the Incarnation of God's eternal Son, the coming of the Mediator, was necessary because apart from His coming man would have no hope of salvation because of the immense gulf that his own sin had created between him and his Creator. His idea of the Fall is largely influenced by primitive mythological conceptions based on a too literal interpretation of
of the early chapters of Genesis, but a doctrine of this kind in some form or other is needed to draw attention to the solidarity of the human race, and to provide an explanation for the wide dissemination of evil in the world. From this point of view, as Owen perceived, the Socinian doctrine is entirely unsatisfactory. Moreover, he rightly affirmed that it was only when man discovered his hopeless position (apart from Christ) that he felt the need for a Mediator and for an objective ground of reconciliation. His doctrine of the Atonement, though marred in its presentation by a too literal interpretation of certain biblical metaphors, such as "ransom", "punishment", and "sacrifice", was based on the conviction that sin was so terrible in its nature and effects that even God could not ignore it without denying Himself and the moral order of His creation.

This is the pivot of Owen's theology: that God Himself provided the Atonement in Christ, in order that through the satisfaction of His Justice the barrier separating Him from men might be removed. He emphasises the truth that the whole scheme of salvation rests upon the divine Love and Mercy. The Mediator stepped forth from eternity, penetrated into the lowest depths of human misery, paid our debt to the Father, suffered the punishment which in the ordinary course of things should have been inflicted upon us, and offered an effective Sacrifice of Atonement on our behalf. The Cross of Christ is unique because it was the God-man who died upon it.

In essence this doctrine faithfully presents the teaching of Scripture. But evidently it is open to the criticism that it draws a too rigid line of demarcation between the Saviour's life and His death. The life and death of Christ constituted the Atonement, and the Cross was the crown of His redemptive activities. Believers henceforth can point to One who truly represents them before the
Father, One who has perfectly fulfilled the requirements of His Love and Righteousness.

Owen's doctrine of predestination, as set forth by him in its bare Calvinistic form, was open to many of the attacks made upon it by the Socinians. Its defects, however, ought not to blind us to the important New Testament principle which it contained, viz., that faith has a transcendent origin, that salvation is a divine gift. Christ's entrance into the world, the justification of sinners on the basis of His Atonement, and the sanctification of sinners through the Holy Spirit, are the effects of the divine predestinatory decree.

Finally he declares that Christ is not merely the Prophet of the Christian Church: He is also her High Priest and King. He alone, as the God-man, could be the High Priest, for only a divine Being could bring us into the presence of the Father, and only a human being could be our true Representative before the throne of Grace. The Sacrifice which He offered while on earth provides the ground for His continuous Intercession on our behalf in His exalted state. His Kingship is not a gift which He received from the Father after His Ascension, but an aspect of His eternal divine Nature. He is King because He is divine, and so His rule extends over the whole creation. Owen deserves particular credit for drawing attention to the spiritual nature of His authority, in an age which tended to suppose that He was a King merely because He was the Lawgiver of the Church as a visible and organised community.

B.

Owen's treatises on Church Government and Worship, however, clearly indicate that he was an ardent believer in the doctrine that Christ, in His kingly capacity, has provided rules and regulations which for all times define the nature, function, government, and
worship of the Church as a visible organisation, and that His Will concerning these matters was fully expressed in Holy Scripture. He claims that through studying the Bible he was led to the conclusion that Congregationalism was the form of ecclesiastical government which conformed most adequately with Christ's demands. According to the New Testament, he urges, a Christian Church is composed of a group of believers who have been called by God out of the world to worship and to obey Him, and no one can be a member of this holy community unless he is a true Christian, i.e., unless he has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Local congregations of this character are to be governed by a pastor, whose duty it is to preach the Word, to administer the Sacraments, and to care for the spiritual welfare of his flock. He is to be assisted in the performance of these functions by the elders, whose duties consist in encouraging the flock to live according to Christ's demands, and administering discipline and censure as the Church deems it necessary. The deacons are to regulate the external affairs of the community, to supervise finances, and to take care of the poor. In her mode of worship the Church should conform strictly with Scripture; practices not enjoined by Scripture should on no account be introduced into her services. The use of images and pictures, for instance, is idolatrous, and the employment of liturgy should be discouraged because it manifests lack of faith in the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Owen's appeal to Scripture on such matters was evidently not without value, for it ensured that practices which did not harmonise with the spirit and character of Christianity would not be countenanced by the Church. But in the light of recent investigations his assumption that the Bible has for all time
defined what forms of ecclesiastical government and worship should be adopted, has been proved to be false. So long as the divine Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments are duly administered, we may suppose that each Christian group or Church has the right to decide such matters for herself in the light of existing circumstances.

Many discussions revolved around the question of 'Schism' in the seventeenth century. The external uniformity achieved by the Mediaeval Church had been destroyed by the Protestant Reformation, and during Owen's lifetime the process of disintegration was accelerated by the emergence of new religious groups and sects. In this atmosphere the various religious denominations charged one another of being guilty of schism. Such a charge was levelled by the Roman Catholics against the Anglicans, who in their turn laid a similar charge against the Nonconformists. Realising that the brunt of this attack was from the nature of the case felt by the Congregationalists, Owen defended them by declaring that a Church became guilty of schism when she departed from the teaching of Scripture, for she thus compelled all those who tried to obey God to secede from her. In such matters as these, he urged, every believer should follow the dictates of his own conscience. If he was convinced that the Church to which he belonged had departed from the Truth, it was his duty to secede from her, and to join another which he believed conformed with the demands of Him who is the King and sole Head of the Christian Church.

Although he strongly advocated that all local congregations should be allowed self-government, he also desired that there should be a close and intimate relationship between the Church and the State. As a typical "man of the Commonwealth" he held that the monarchy, on account of its licentiousness and intolerance, had
proved itself unworthy to lead the people, who ought to be governed by Christian statesmen. On many occasions, especially during the years 1652-1660, he reminded Parliament that God would bring peace and prosperity to Britain only if her rulers were persons whose lives had been transformed by the Grace of God. The State should use all available means to ensure that the Gospel was preached in its purity throughout the land. It is true, as Jordan remarks, that he "exhibited neither the bitter fear of prelacy nor the almost fanatical opposition to Presbyterian bigotry so marked in the other thinkers of his party"(4), and yet on the question of religious toleration he remained conservative. His belief that Christianity ought to be propagated along purely spiritual lines was counteracted by the conviction that no one would experience salvation without first of all accepting certain doctrinal 'fundamentals', which he in the company of others attempted to define. So great was his horror of heresy, whether it appeared in the form of Roman Catholicism, Arminianism, Socinianism, or Quakerism, that he encouraged Parliament to enforce a credal uniformity on the nation. But he was prepared to grant toleration to those who accepted the 'fundamentals', even if they disagreed with him in their ideas concerning ecclesiastical polity and Church worship, since he considered the latter questions to be of comparatively minor importance. Since he would not go farther than this, he appeared to men like Milton and Cromwell as a reactionary. It must be recognised, however, that in later years - perhaps under the influence of persecution - he frequently emphasised that Christianity must be freely accepted by individuals through a personal act of faith, and that external conformity with the demands of the State, unless accompanied by inward conviction, was of no value in the sight of God,
Valuable contributions were made by Owen to the devotional literature of his own day. Some of his best passages, unfortunately, were buried among dry and lengthy scholastic discussions, so that to reach them some effort is required on the part of the reader. Moffat has for this reason compared them to refreshing oases in a wilderness. Most of these compositions are introspective in character; they reveal his extraordinary ability to analyse human motives, and to probe into the secret recesses of the human heart. His treatises on "Heavenly Mindedness" and on "the Mortification of Sin in Believers" were highly commended by Wilberforce (5), while his "Communion with God", though marred as usual by a multitude of definitions and subdivisions, contains excellent material, which for the historian is valuable as an indication of the high spiritual plane on which Owen lived during those strenuous years when he was Vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford. Although he was for some years a person of considerable influence in Puritan England, he became neither arrogant nor proud; on the contrary, he retained a beautiful humility of spirit, which arose from a deep and unwavering consciousness that all human virtues and achievements were the gifts of Him who is the Father of all mercies. It was not so with many of his fellow-Puritans who, after tasting the luxury of power, became as arrogant and intolerant as those whom they had supplanted, "What were those before us that we are not?" he cries. "Prosperity hath slain the foolish and wounded the wise." (6).

Believing that no one could achieve spiritual excellence without constant self-questioning, he wrote his devotional works to guide believers in the task of self-examination. If we know our own hearts, says Owen, we shall be humble, contrite, and reverent, in our walk with God, and less critical of the short-comings of others. (7).
His earlier practical treatises were chiefly concerned with analysing human motives and intentions, whereas in his later works he fixed his gaze on that which is above until he was finally overwhelmed by the glory of his exalted Lord. He desired above all to show that the Gospel told man to cast away "the yoke of self-wrought-out mortification"(8). As a Calvinist the watchword of his theology was: sola gratia, sola fide, soli deo gloria. Salvation is the fruit of divine Grace, and a man ought to examine his own thoughts and actions continually to discover whether he is in a state of Grace. Moreover, in this sinful world no man can keep his affections pure without constant watchfulness, prayer, active faith, and daily self-examination.(9). Believers ought to meditate on divine truths until finally they are able to "fix themselves upon and cleave unto all spiritual things."(10).

The introspective method employed by Owen is not valued so highly to-day as it was in the seventeenth century. It has been indicated that it savours so much of legalism that it cannot be regarded as spiritually beneficial from the standpoint of the Christian Gospel. With some justification it has been pointed out that it tends to make the individual egocentric. But by endeavoring to evade its bad effects men have gone to the other extreme, which is much more detrimental to the Christian life: in these days they seem to pay so little attention to the state of their own hearts that their consciousness of sin is thus seriously impaired. The New Testament affirms that believers should watch and pray lest they fall into temptation. By obeying such injunctions Puritans of Owen's calibre preserved, in the midst of earthly affairs, their self-control, their spiritual independence, and their unflinching devotion to God and His Kingdom.
In his own day Owen was recognised as a master of theological controversy. Although most of his controversial writings were (as one might expect) marred by the literary vices of the period, he commands our respect because he never employed bitter language to denounce an opponent unless he had been unduly provoked. However much he disliked the views of his opponents he respected their persons. As a rule he adopts the method of quoting at length the views of his antagonists, and then he subjects these to minute and exhaustive criticism in the light of his own interpretation of Scripture.

D.

His memory was revered by Nonconformists for many years after his death, and several of his great treatises have in the past been recognised by them as standard works in the various departments of Christian theology. But to-day they lie forgotten on the shelf. This neglect of Owen is a matter for regret, and it is to be hoped that the recent rise and progress of the "Barthian" theology will lead us once more to renew our acquaintance with the writings of this great Puritan divine. His works are now so much neglected for a variety of reasons:

Firstly, many of his cherished ideas have been overthrown by the advances made in recent years in Biblical Criticism and the Psychology of Religion. Secondly, the modern reader is tired by his old-fashioned scholastic method and by the exhaustiveness with which he treats every subject. Thirdly, the scope of his interests was extremely narrow and limited. He frequently referred to the Greek and Latin Classics, for instance, but without showing much appreciation of their contents; he invariably quotes them either to prove their inferiority to biblical and Christian literature, or to clinch an argument which had previously been proved valid on other grounds. He likewise expressed no appreciation of the great
Elizabethans or, of the outstanding literary personalities of his own
day. Bacon, Shakespeare, Falkland, and Milton, to name only a few,
are not even mentioned by him. He had but little interest in the
world of nature, and only on very rare occasions did he even hint at
the possibility of finding joy in the life of this present world.
He did not believe that there was a real inner connection between
God and Nature: his view was similar to that of Luther, who held
that "Nature has been so deeply corrupted by the Fall that not merely
the present nature of man, but Nature in general, only reveals God
in exceptional circumstances."(11). Moreover, in his writings he
showed remarkably little concern for the men and women among whom
he constantly lived.

Finally, the modern reader is much handicapped by Owen's
diffused and prolix style. His long, involved sentences, his lack of
simplicity, his careless selection and far too frequent use of
adjectives, do not make attractive reading. These deficiencies
cannot be excused by appealing to the state of the English language
in those days, for some of his contemporaries wrote excellent prose.
The language became much more flexible in the seventeenth century
on account of a variety of causes, such as the influence of the
example set by contemporary French writers, the appearance and
growth of science, and the transformation of England into a business
nation(12), but Owen did not change his manner of writing to meet
the demands of a new age. He probably thought that his whole attention
should be devoted to the matter of his discourse, and so did not
concern himself with the form in which it was presented. Moffat,
however, rightly affirms that-

"although few authors of that period dealt in larger sequences
or in less staccato utterances, with the possible exception of
Goodwin and Baxter, it is rather curious to find that Owen's
pages are always pithier than his books, his paragraphs
occasionally richer than his pages, and his aphorisms or sentences less obsolete than many of his paragraphs." (13).

FOOT-NOTES TO CHAPTER ELEVEN (PART TWO).

1. "Vindiciae Evangelicae" (1655), "Works", XII., 49.
2. "Christologia; or, A Declaration of the Glorious Mystery of the Person of Christ" (1679), "Works", I., 3.
10. Ibid., 420.
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ABBREVIATIONS.


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