

over the hearts of men! What extreme ignorance of man's ruined and sinful condition! What ignorance of the real necessity of a complete salvation, all of grace, in Christ! What melancholy ignorance of the necessity of God's working in his people, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure! Such darkness hath covered the earth, and gross darkness the people! And till the Lord is pleased to arise and shine, that vail will remain upon their hearts; for, saith the precious Jesus, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." John vi. 44. He does not say, merely, they *will not*, but they *cannot*: there is not only an inability of the will, but also of the power: not only a *moral* but a *natural* inability. In fact, a man, in his natural state, has nothing to do with the religion of Jesus Christ: God gives the sinner an entirely *new* heart; so that it is not a *reformation* of the *old* man, who is the servant and slave of sin, but a *renovation*; a *new* creature, created, by the Eternal Spirit, in the image of Jesus.

Having reviewed sin in its nature, consequences, and effects, I shall proceed to discuss one of the most glorious, lovely, and engaging subjects in the whole Bible; consisting of the best news that ever was proclaimed to a poor sinner; the most delicious feast that ever a Prince royal of heaven possessed: a precious bleeding Christ; Salvation by his blood; or, according to my proposal,

## III. Its cleansing efficacy.

Nothing but the blood of Jesus can cleanse from sin, and produce a pure heart and conscience, in the sinner: For, while the heart remains in its natural and impure state, vain and ineffectual are all the prayers, tears, and duties of the creature.

After the most strict, and scrupulous attention to ordinances, the works of his own hands leave him in the very same state of impurity and uncleanness! God is unknown, his throne inaccessible, and the worship of the sinner, legal, carnal, and external. God is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in Spirit and in truth; and is approachable only through the atoning blood of Jesus.

1st. Then, for this grand end was Jesus made flesh, and sent into our world; that he might purify, and cleanse us from all sin. To this prophecy bears a most glorious testimony, and has been punctually, and completely fulfilled by Christ.

By the mouth of Daniel, the Lord saith, "Many shall be purified and made white, and tried:" (Daniel xii. 10.) and, that Christ the Lord, the messenger of the Covenant, was to perform this great work, is evident from Malachi iii. 3. "And he shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

This is corroborated by Isaiah, "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." Isaiah liii. 5. His blood is "The fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." Zechariah xiii. 1. And O! what a consolation it is, to be assured that he hath carried this grand design of heaven, into glorious, and everlasting effect.—That "he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus ii. 14.

2nd. That his blood hath completely cleansed all for whom he died: for there cannot exist a more erroneous, and preposterous idea; there cannot be greater dishonour reflected on the blessed Saviour, than, that his blood was shed in vain! If he died for every individual of mankind, and his blood alone, the shedding of his blood, cleanseth from all sin, then all mankind are so cleansed, and must infallibly be saved: but, as we are well assured that all mankind are not saved, he could not shed his blood for them all: we must, necessarily, draw this conclusion, or else, that his blood has no virtue to cleanse; which would be a flat contradiction to our text, and to the whole tenor of Sacred Writ!

But it is a truth which will not, with any common modesty and decency, admit a single argument in attempting a refutation, that he laid down his life for his sheep, and, consequently, they

shall never perish. (John x. 11—28) That he hath purchased his church with his own blood (Acts xx. 28.) That he gave himself for it. (Ephesians v. 25) and that his church is not the world at large, but chosen out of the world; (John xv. 19.) bought with a price, bought and paid for, with the invaluable price of his blood; and, that, consequently, he shall see his seed, see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. Isaiah liii.

3rd. Its efficacy is such, that justice is perfectly satisfied, and well pleased for his righteousness' sake. We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Ephesians i. 7. If Jesus hath thus taken the sins of his people upon himself, (and that he has is evident, see 1 Peter ii. 24. and iii. 18.) where is the possibility of the imputation of sin to those for whom he died? "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ who died." (Romans viii. 34.) To charge the Lord with condemning a sinner for whom Jesus shed his blood, is to attribute to him that conduct, which an honest man would blush to be found guilty of; which he would spurn with indignant contempt; or, if convicted, would acknowledge, that his shameful conduct merited the severest reprobation. For where, I would ask, is the man, possessed of common moral honesty, who would, knowingly, demand the same

debt again, after receiving full payment, and giving a receipt? and hath not justice received full payment at the hands, yea, from the very heart of Christ, and given him a receipt, a discharge for all his people, by his admittance into the heavens as their forerunner, and advocate, who pleads his own merit, in their behalf? He gave himself a ransom for his people, and,

“ Payment God cannot twice demand,  
First at my bleeding surety's hand,  
And then again at mine,”

It has been a settled point with me, for many years, that if Jesus died for me, I never shall perish. My destruction is impossible, my salvation and glorification everlastingly secure!

But how is this ascertained? How does a sinner satisfactorily know, and rejoice, that Christ died for him, as an *individual*? By the Spirit's application of the atonement to his heart; by

4th. *It's effects on the conscience.* It's purifying influence, and cleansing virtue, is known, as the sinner is delivered from the condemnation of the law, brought out of the horrible pit of despair, and Satan's horrible suggestions; and out of the mire and clay of his bondage to sin and corruption, by a sweet, and never to be explained, display of the ability of Christ to save! His chains fall off, his fears are gone; he knows there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ.

He is happy, completely happy; the gospel of bleeding love has made him so—he can say, “Christ is truly precious:” for he feels him precious indeed! And this I call, receiving the truth, in the love of it, and consequently, feeling its power: which is nothing short of an almighty application of the blood of Christ to the conscience! Hence it is called, “*The blood of sprinkling* ;” (1 Peter i. 2. Hebrews xii. 24,) which is a beautiful, and very elucidating metaphor, adopted by the Holy Spirit, in reference to the blood sprinkled on the houses of the Israelites. (Exodus xii. 13.) “And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you, to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt.”

That blood was typical of this infinitely precious blood, which, thus powerfully revealed, is a sweet token indeed to the poor sinner. “Christ his passover was sacrificed for him,” whose blood, sprinkled on his conscience, forbids avenging justice to come near him. It has cleansed him, and he feels it: his sins are *all gone*. Great, numerous, and aggravating as they were, not one appears to his confusion and distress, at such a truly happy season! Justice cannot smite him, having smitten his Surety, whose blood is a token of his everlasting reconciliation to God. It cleanses, it washes from all sin: the knowledge of which makes the church triumph, who thus

ascribes glory to her Great Redeemer: "Unto him that loved us, and *washed* us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Revelations i. 5.

Sin being thus divinely, and completely cleansed away, the *ransomed* soul approaches God with an humble, holy boldness, and enjoys most delightful interviews with him as his covenant Father, and affectionate Friend! For, though once afar off, he is made nigh by the blood of Christ. Ephesians ii. 13. *Made* nigh—not made *himself* nigh by his own preperation, and pretendedly holy duties; but made nigh, through the Spirit's revelation of the blood of Christ. Simply, and entirely by that blood the sinner is made nigh: embraces a pardoning God, feels the celestial sweetness of divine love, exults in his everlasting completeness in Christ, and appears before the Lord "blameless in love;" more gloriously arrayed than an angel, and "pure as God himself is pure!"

O ye sin despairing souls! Ye want nothing of your own, to present you faultless before your God; the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin; and to be found in him, is to possess a righteousness, not only commensurate with all that the law commands, and justice can possibly require; but so bright, so gloriously spotless, divinely immaculate, and inconceivably mag-

nificent, that we are said, by an inspired writer, to be made the Righteousness of God in him! Thus cleansed in his blood, and clothed in his righteousness, we must be, notwithstanding all our indwelling sin, pure as our heavenly Father is pure! And thus we appear before our God at all times; and shall to eternity; justified, perfect, blameless, lovely, amiable, beautiful, and everlastingly precious and invaluable in the eyes of eternal love!

And all this, remember, entirely in, and through the precious Jesus! Surely then we cannot but highly approve, and affectionately join the church's triumph of praise. "He is altogether lovely! This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend!" (Solomon's Song v. 16.)

Through the cleansing of his blood, what sweet communion we enjoy with our God! Every impediment to that luxuriant, and insuperable enjoyment, is removed—by removing our sins, he hath taken every thing out of our way that was against us, so that we have "boldness to enter into the holiest, by the *Blood of Jesus!* and pleading the efficacy of his blood, as the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, we prevail in prayer, and enjoy intercourse with heaven!"

When dejected, cast down, weary, and heavy laden, his most precious blood is that generous

wine which revives, cheers, and re-animates our faint and exanimated hearts: When afflicted and sick with a variety of complicated, and internal complaints, it ever proves an efficacious restorative to health, and vigour in the divine life. We eat his flesh, we *drink his blood!* (John vi. 54.) What a beautiful figure of that nourishment, support, and spiritual restoration, we so repeatedly experience from a fresh display of his atonement! Sin arises in us so powerfully, and exhibits so many frightful, and horrific scenes, that we are truly miserable! But when the loving kindness of God our Saviour appears; when we are led again to look on him who was pierced, and to venture wholly on him, reviving consolation breaks in upon us like a river with broad streams! Love re-kindles, hope revives, and faith exultingly cries; "It is enough! Jesus is yet alive! whose blood is ever efficacious! It cleanses from all sin: and, therefore, as a sinner, so cleansed, I venture wholly on my altogether lovely, and able Saviour; trusting to, and rejoicing in, him alone! And, from what I have so recently felt of carnal nature's impurities, cannot, dare not, put any kind of confidence in the flesh!"

Its efficacy, and invincible power, are farther evinced, by that complete conquest, or those repeated and numerous conquests, which believers decisively, and triumphantly obtain, over the mighty and malicious "Accuser of the brethren." (Revelations xii. 11.) "They overcome him by

the *Blood of the Lamb*, and the word of their testimony." All his discouraging suggestions are answered by, "Jesus died for sinners;" and all his fiery darts are quenched, by this one everlastingly precious, and glorious expression, HIS BLOOD CLEANSETH FROM ALL SIN!

Satan may, and does, accuse us of our ingratitude to God, and our high rebellion against him. He tells us of our unworthiness, negligence, carelessness, hardness of heart, darkness, ignorance, and inactivity in the spiritual life—all which a real believer keenly feels, and candidly acknowledges, till he is ready to faint—but when the free love, and cleansing blood of Jesus, is again brought home to his soul, he tramples upon the Old Serpent, and the Dragon, with the feet of faith, shod with the preparation (or foundation) of the gospel of peace: and with a confession, peace, and confidence peculiar to such a faith, says, "I am black, but comely." (Solomon's Song i. 5.) I abhor myself; (Job xlii. 6.) and esteem my righteousness as filthy rags, (Isaiah lxiv. 6.) loss, and dung, that I may win Christ. (Philippians iii. 8.) "Let the beauty of the Lord my God be upon me: for it is in the Lord Jesus Jehovah, that I have everlasting strength, and righteousness!"

This is the victory, even our faith; by which we shall not only quench all the fiery darts of hell, but outbrave, and triumph over, Death himself, who, even when we walk through his dreary

valley, and lay in his cold arms, shall hear us sing, salvation by the blood of the Lamb, and shout "Death is swallowed up in victory!" For though the sting of Death is *sin*, and the strength of sin, the law, yet, with unmoved confidence in Jesus, we can say, "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians xv. 57.

As his blood does so effectually, and everlastingly cleanse from all sin, I shall proceed to consider,

IV. *Who it cleanses.* Us, saith the text: All the elect of God, who were given to Christ to redeem; and who, on that account, are called and sanctified by the Spirit. This is most clearly stated, and confirmed by the inspired *Peter*, who, addressing his Epistles to believers, calls them, "Elect," according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience; and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter i. 2.

*Us*, the worst, and vilest of sinners: the most polluted of the polluted, the most worthless among the unworthy, and the most rebellious of a rebel world! So sensible are we of this, that had it been said, only, that his blood cleanseth from sin of a less aggravating nature, than that of a deep and crimson dye—had it not been said from ALL SIN—we should for ever despair of salvation!

But, O how sweetly is this invaluable, and boundlessly efficacious balm of the GREAT PHYSICIAN administered! The balm prescribed by eternal love, shed on Calvary by JESUS, and graciously administered to sin-sick souls, by the HOLY SPIRIT. Healing most effectually, and for ever, all our direful diseases! A universal Cleanser! It cleanses *us*, even us, the chief of sinners; and cleanses us, thoroughly, from all sin! We have proved its virtue thousands of times, and can bear testimony to its never-failing, healing, and purifying efficacy.

But as it cleanses the vilest of sinners, and from all sin, probably it may be asked, "Does it then cleanse from the sin against the Holy Ghost?" For the sin-sick soul, who pants for Jesus, to ask such a question, is, indeed, altogether superfluous; since the Scriptures so clearly prove, that such a person never was, nor can be guilty of it.

And yet it is an enquiry I wish to answer, because I know it is, sometimes, a very distressing temptation, under which a child of God in spiritual travail, often distressedly labours. But fully to answer the question, we must examine the nature of that unpardonable crime: to do which I shall have recourse to that clear, and unequivocal statement of Christ himself, recorded in Matthew xii. 31, 32, where, in reprobating the *malicious*, persecuting conduct of the Pharisees, he says, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven

unto men: but the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

From this description, it is, evidently, the most consummate malice, boiling in the heart, exhibited, publicly, in the conduct, and most inveterately expressed, against the glorious Gospel of the blessed God! For those malicious Pharisees knew it was by a *Divine Power* that Jesus effected his miracles, and yet such was their implacable enmity against him, that they most maliciously, and against the brightest evidences and conviction, attributed them to the power of *Beelzebub!* They knew those miracles were performed by the finger of God, yet, most blasphemously, called them the works of the devil!

This the child of God cannot do: he may sin wilfully, and dreadfully, in a great variety of ways, against *light*; but, when once he knows the Gospel to be the power of God unto salvation, cannot, *with malice*, publicly contemn, and treat it with ridicule, nor, in any way, maliciously oppose, and denominate it diabolical.

"Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man," saith Jesus, "it shall be forgiven him."

Had they only spoken against Christ, in his state of humiliation, without beholding his miracles, their crime would have been, comparatively, small; but seeing they had such convincing proofs of his **ETERNAL POWER AND GODHEAD**, their blasphemy was extreme, unpardonable, and an evident token of their reprobation, and eternal damnation! For such “shall never be forgiven!”

And now, a sinner, through ignorance and unbelief, may speak a word against the Son of Man; and even a sinner, in whom the Lord has begun a good work:—he may ignorantly contend for universal redemption, and for the performance of duties, as a recommendation to the divine favour, which is speaking against Christ, and detracting from his glory, by setting aside the efficacy of his blood, and ascribing to our duties, the power and honour due alone to his grace.

This I was guilty of myself, when an *Arminian*; and, yet, I have no doubt but a gracious work was then begun in my soul. I did it ignorantly, and in unbelief. But, after knowing, and professing the truth, to contemn, despise, and persecute it, under the immediate influence of malicious hatred, is that which a child of God cannot do; however he may backslide, or fall away: for his enmity is slain, and though grievous sin may overcome him, he cannot falsify, misrepresent, and maliciously blaspheme the *truth* as it is in Jesus.

Peter's oaths were tremendously dreadful; yet, though he swore that he never knew Christ, he neither swore *at* him, nor *against* him. His oaths were not dictated by malice to Christ, but by cowardice, and the fear of man; and were, evidently, uttered (though a desperate expedient) to procure personal safety, by concealment of his intimacy with Jesus. I speak not this either to excuse Peter, or extenuate his crime.—He was desperately wicked, and his crime nefarious and detestable to an inexpressible degree:—but to prove that, however miserably far a child of God may fall, he has no malice against Christ, and will never persecute, *maliciously* persecute his church; and, consequently, cannot be found guilty of the unpardonable sin, the sin unto Death!

Poor sinner, though Satan strives hard to persuade you of having been guilty of this uncancellable crime, fear not, I know that you seek Jesus; and seeking him is, most certainly, neither to blaspheme his Eternal Power and Godhead, nor with malice, knowing it to be the Gospel, to resist the Holy Ghost in his Great Work of promulgating it, by persecuting his ministers and people, in whom he dwells.

I conclude, then, by affirming, positively, that, however the children of God may fall to their distress, and anguish of soul, the blood of Jesus still retains its sin-cleansing virtue, to restore them, and shall remain so, till all his people be

brought, through much tribulation, unto his kingdom of glory. For, saith the apostle, to our encouragement, not *in* sin, (as we be slanderously reported,) but to look again unto Jesus, the great atoning sacrifice.

*If we sin wilfully*; that evidently is, If we, who are called by divine grace, sin, as we frequently do, there remaineth *not any more victim* to be offered for an atonement: for, by ONE OFFERING, he hath perfected for ever those who are sanctified in him: and, in course, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous.” (1 Peter ii. 1.)

But, when sin prevails, if, instead of looking unto Jesus, we turn our eyes from him, with a view to offer some other sacrifice, such as the works of our own hands, there remains nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment: for, take Christ out of the way, leave him out of the question; and, whatever sacrifice beside you may look to, nothing is discernible but judgment and fiery indignation: which must be, undeniably, the case, since HE, and HE *only* is our peace.

And that the children of God sin after they have received a knowledge of the truth, I presume no person, who believes the Scriptures, will pretend to contradict: (1 John i. 8.) and, admitting they sin, it follows, of course, that they *must* sin

wilfully (*or willingly,*) for, without the will, they would never sin at all: but the question is, with what *will* do they sin? and, yet, such a question is absurd, except more than *one Will* inhabits and actuates the man. But that there are in one, and the self-same person, *two wills*, as opposite to each other as light and darkness, holiness and sin, love and hatred, I hope most clearly, and satisfactorily to prove: and then to conclude, by shewing that the *will* of our old carnal nature, is the stimulating principle which hurries on the poor sinner, in rebellion against God; in opposition to his better self, the *new man*, who may safely say, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

The *will* of the *new man* is that which God creates, and gives at the time of regeneration; which was promised in Covenant to Christ: Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. (Psalm cx. 3.) It is a *will* which requires the exertion of Omnipotence in its creation, and a perpetual supply of divine grace, to carry it into an actual performance of the Will of God: For it is God which worketh in you, both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure. (Philippians ii. 13.) This is a will, therefore, independent of the natural will, with which man sins against the Lord: The *natural will*, which is called the *will* of the flesh, (John i. 13.) in contradistinction to this spiritual will, with which a Christian cannot sin: being always opposite to the law of sin, which is warring

in his members, against the law of his mind. And is a *will* to believe, pray, resign to the divine *will*, love Christ, embrace him by faith, and walk in all his delightful ways. Though, often he is under the painful necessity of complaining, with Paul, "To *will* is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." Therefore, it is very evident, that a distinct *will* to that with which sin is committed, exists, and opposes sin, perpetually, in the soul of a believer: and in consideration of such a spiritual opposition to sin, it argues, most powerfully, that the natural *bent*, and *bias* of the fleshly will, is to sin against God: and, with such a depraved *will*, does the Christian, who has received a knowledge of the truth, sin; whenever he wanders from the fold of Christ.

But, poor distressed sinner! Wretched Backslider! Or, you who are wandering sheep from the fold! Rely upon it, as an indisputable truth, that no comfort, no deliverance, no restoration of soul, flows from any other source than that of the Redeemer's blood!—No other sacrifice is needful to bring you back to God! May his bleeding love dissolve you at his feet, in affectionate repentance, holy indignation against sin, and the most devoted adoration and delight! Then shall you say, "HE is precious indeed to those who believe."