

The Efficacy of the Blood of Christ:

A
Sermon,
Preached at Hephzibah Chapel, Wood
Street,
October 22, 1809.

By
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1 John 1:7

**And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all
sin.**

This passage at once proves, that the church of Christ is, naturally, in a filthy and polluted condition, far from God, and incapable of coming to him, having neither will nor power; and that even where the Lord influences the soul, both to will and to do of his good pleasure, the Mercy-Seat is inaccessible, without the cleansing Blood of the **Great High Priest** of our profession, Jesus Christ, the Righteous.

Through the great atonement, and the purifying, and cleansing efficacy of that infinitely precious, and peace-proclaiming blood, and through that alone, we have boldness of access unto the inconceivably pure, and righteous Jehovah: entering the holiest of all, and with an energy peculiar to the faith

of God's elect, fervently, familiarly, and affectionately cry, **Abba, Father!**

The atonement prevails in our behalf – no tremendous frown is seen on the brow, no thunderbolt of vindictive vengeance in the hand of inflexible justice – no fiery law denounces everlasting curses against us – **Jesus fills the throne** – the Father looks upon the face of his own **anointed**, his best **beloved**, in whom he is well pleased!

His blood speaketh in the heavens! – His blood speaketh in our consciences, better things than that of the blood of Abel. It speaketh *to us, in us, and for us*; in language so forcible, so sweet, and overcoming, that it always prevails to the liberation, consolation, and joyful festivity of our own souls. It speaketh for us universally, and perpetually. To *justice* – "Atoning blood hath cleansed them, and purged away all their crimes – Where now are thy charges of guilt? His blood is a full receipt for thy tremendous account." At which justice satisfied, *looks*, approves, and *smiles!* – To Satan, when accusing a poor sensible sinner, it speaks thus: Take away his filthy garments: Is not this a brand plucked from the burning? Or, Is not his *filth* all cleansed away? And, are not the garments of salvation; those spotless, noble, royal, crimson garments, most exquisitely wrought by Christ's own hand, and dyed in his blood, sufficient to present him, without spot, before the throne of love? And to introduce him in to the company, and give him boldness in the presence of the inconceivably splendid, magnificent, and august courtiers, who encircle the throne of God, and the Lamb? Nay, to give him boldness in the sacred presence of the **King of Kings**, and the **Lord of Lords**? Satan, the Lord rebuke thee! He is a brand plucked from the burning, by that omnipotent arm of redemption, which none of your malicious forces, nor artifices, shall ever, in the least *unnerve*, till judgment be brought forth unto victory; till thine empire in the hearts of God's elect be overthrown, and all the redeemed plucked from the burning of sin, the world, and thy temptations, by the hand of eternal love, into the world of eternal glory.

In us, sprinkled upon the conscience, it proclaims peace; and **to us**, declares, in the most delightful accents, "Though your sins be *many*, and of *long* standing, very aggravating, and so grievously stubborn, that you cannot subdue, nor obtain a victory over it, notwithstanding all your endeavors:" – though sin dwells within you, and does so easily beset you, fear not, look to **Jesus**, who has suffered, and atoned, for those very sins which are now your burden, grief, perplexity, and bitterest complaint before the Lord. He receiveth sinners, because he died for them; and such redeemed sinners, called, and established in the truth, daily live upon the great contents of this delightful sentence, "*the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin!*"

As sin is felt, acknowledged, and hated, by every regenerated sinner, and is our daily, and almost perpetual plague, by its internal hostility to the new, and hidden man of the heart; surely nothing can be more encouraging, animating, and delightful, than to hear of the "*Great Purifier* of the sons of Levi," whose heart's blood is an open fountain, accessible to every poor sinner led there by the eternal Spirit, to know its cleansing efficacy, in producing unspotted purity of heart. Redemption by the blood of Christ, particular and certain redemption, is the good hope, fervent plea, and sure refuge, of the sinner who feels sin's impurity, plague, and power: salvation flowing from the heart of Jesus in crimson streams; the complete removal of **all sin** from the church of God, by that great and complete atonement, is the foundation upon which the great apostle stood, when exulting, with a joy peculiar to the divine life, in the purity, justification, and certain salvation of God's people: Rom. 8:34, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ who died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us!" And in this, we, who know the Lord rejoice, confide, and triumph; knowing that "There is no other name given under the heavens, among men, whereby we must be saved," but the divinely sweet name of **Jesus Christ of Nazareth**; and that there is no deliverance from the guilt, filth, and consequence of sin, but by the cleansing of his blood;

and, above all, knowing its virtue to cleanse, not only by the apostle's testimony, but more especially by a purged conscience, and purified heart, we esteem it our exalted privilege to investigate the great concerns of our salvation; and, at this time, the **atonement**, the complete atonement of our **Immanuel**, by which we are cleansed, and eternally exempt from the charge of sin!

May the Lord, then, favor us with his gracious presence, in the discussion of this admirable subject, that we may pursue it with ardent affection, glowing and intrepid zeal, serious solemnity and increasing delight!

I propose to consider,

I. Whose blood cleanseth – the blood of **Jesus Christ, His Son**.

II. What it cleanseth from – **all sin**.

III. Its cleansing efficacy and effects.

IV. Who it cleanses – us; poor sinners, called to know ourselves, and our election in Christ.

With an animating hope that the Lord will attend me with his presence and blessing, and render his truth effectual in our abounding consolation, I proceed to offer to your serious consideration,

I. Whose blood cleanseth.

The blood of **Jesus** – by this glorious, and super eminently exalted name, his Eternal Godhead is asserted, and revealed too conspicuously to admit the shadow of a doubt, or to suffer any wise and unprejudiced man, who will allow the literal meaning of the word, to advance a single argument against it!

Jesus! O precious name! soul-enamoring word! Beaming with all the glories of heaven, proclaiming the deliverance of sinners from the ruins of the Fall, and breaking upon the attentive ear with sounds too melodious for nature: sounds which vibrate only through the regenerate soul, and to which no other powers can give reverberation, but those of the new man in Christ. **Jesus!** What does it mean? Literally, **Jehovah, A Saviour**: God manifest

in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). A child, born into this world, and yet the **Mighty God!** (Isa. 9:6). Immanuel, God with us (Matt. 1:23).

Wonderful mystery! Unparalleled condescension! Immeasurable descent! The mystery of Deity incarnate, the condescension of a God, and the descent of the King of Glory, the Creator of all things, to dwell among worms of the earth! Jesus, Jehovah the Saviour, the only wise God, arrayed in human flesh! Taking our place, that he might take our sins, conquer our foes, and crown his triumph over them, with our eternal salvation! Blessed be the name of Jesus! Blessed be the glorious name of his Majesty for ever! That divinely illustrious name, hated by infidels, dreaded by devils, but loved, and adored, by all the regenerated sons and daughters of the Almighty! Jesus hath cleansed us from all our sins! **Jehovah** is our Saviour – wearing our flesh – our brother near a kin, clothed in a body like unto our own, in which not only dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead, but all the immense riches of unfading love, and all the fullness of grace, and everlasting salvation!

2. **Christ**; *the anointed*. Anointed, and set apart by everlasting love, for the filling and executing of certain glorious infinitely holy, and exalted offices. As the High Priest, under the ceremonial law, was anointed with a *sacred unction*, as a qualification for the execution of his office, so **Jesus**, arrayed in human flesh, received the Spirit without measure; who through the Eternal Spirit, offered, not the sacrifices of bulls and goats, but **himself**; his human soul and body upon the altar of his divinity: and, as "the altar sanctifieth the gift," it became eternally efficacious in removing sin, and infinitely satisfying to offended justice; purifying, everlastingly, all for whom he died.

Christ, the Lord's anointed, a Lamb of his own providing, a body of his own preparing; anointed, and set apart, to die for his people: according to his own declaration, "Thus it is written, and thus it *behoved* Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:" (Luke 24:46), which, according to the apostle's account, he hath done effectually: "Those things which God before had showed

by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath fulfilled" (Acts 3:18); and, according to Paul's account, of indispensable necessity, who, as his manner was, reasoning with the Jews out of the Scriptures, "opened and alleged that Christ must *needs* have suffered" (Acts 17:3). Hence we may fairly infer, nay, must unavoidably conclude, that Christ, as the second person in the Trinity, in the Covenant of Grace, proposed, at a certain specified and appointed time, to become very man, in order to be capable of dying; and that by so dying on the cross, and canceling all their sins, he should infallibly bring many sons to glory; even as many as the Father had given him. And as all things written in the prophets are fulfilled by him, he certainly hath brought forth judgment unto victory, and shall see his seed, the travail of his soul, the trophies of his conquests, all in the world of glory; encircling his royal throne, with palms of victory in their hands, and crowns of salvation on their heads!

Christ, the anointed *King of Israel*: and being lineally the Son of David, he had certainly an hereditary right to that crown and kingdom: and it appears, his disciples must have entertained an idea of his coronation, and accession to that throne; for, immediately after his death, they lamentingly said, "We thought it had been him who should have restored the kingdom unto Israel:" and hence those who imbrued their hands in his blood, mockingly exclaimed, "Let Christ, the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." But what a gross and fallacious idea! "His kingdom is not of this world:" it is all glorious, spiritual, heavenly, and eternal. "Him hath God exalted with his own right hand to be a *Prince* and a *Saviour*, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). His reign on earth is maintained in Sion by the Spirit's powerful application of the Gospel, by which we know that his "kingdom is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17).

And he will extend his empire, by carrying his Gospel to the ends of the earth; for he is **King of Kings, and Lord of Lords**;

which unparalleled title is written on his thigh, to show that he will "Gird his sword there, and with his glory and majesty, ride prosperously because of truth and meekness, that his right hand may teach him terrible things."

And when, as the *anointed King of Israel*, he shall have gathered all his elect from the "four winds of the earth," they shall be for ever with him, their Lord, to behold him, in all the inconceivable grandeur of heavenly majesty and magnificence, crowned by saints and angels, **the Lord of Hosts, mighty in battle, the King of Glory!**

3. **His Son.** The Son of God in a two-fold sense, pre-eminently, and *eternally*, as the second person in the Trinity; not begotten; that is too gross an idea; but in the economy of the Covenant of Grace, and in his official capacity, as *Mediator* between God and man, set up from everlasting: not the human soul of Christ set up from everlasting: that sentiment, though embraced by some, who, I believe, are taught of God, is absurdity in the extreme! And though taught by the Spirit, in other important matters, I am persuaded he never taught them to imbibe a sentiment so averse, both to the divinity and humanity of Christ! But the glory which the Eternal Son had with the Father, before all worlds, was his *mediatorial* glory – proposing, and engaging, to take upon him our nature, exempt from sin; and in order to accomplish this, he became the Son of God, in a *secondary* sense, by the Holy Ghost overshadowing the Virgin, and his consequent miraculous conception in her womb. On which account the Spirit saith, "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his **Son**, *made* of a woman, *made* under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" – Gal. 4:4-5.

Thus I have considered, and I am persuaded, clearly proved, to the satisfaction of all who know, and love the gospel, **whose** blood cleanseth from all sin: that it is no less than the blood of Jesus, Jehovah the Saviour – Christ, the Lord's anointed – The Son of God – whose precious blood, by virtue of the wonderful union

of God and man, in *One Person*, is most emphatically denominated "*The blood of God*"; not that Deity could bleed: but the man, being a part of the very same Person with the Godhead, is, alone upon the ground of this delightful union, very consistently, and truly entitled, "*the Man, God's Fellow*"; whose blood was shed by Deity, in as much as Deity dwelt in, and actuated the humanity: and, therefore, though God was not sacrificed, it was a sacrifice made by the eternal God, Christ Jesus our Lord!

This is a great and unsearchable mystery; but it is also a great, essential, and very precious truth: for if his blood could not be proved thus **divinely rich**; but, on the contrary, disproved, I must for ever sink in despair, the church of Christ perish, and every individual of the human race fail of salvation!

But our Jesus fills the throne above, and it is the express command of heaven, "That all men honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." When he bringeth his first begotten into the world, he saith, "And let all the angels of God worship him."

I proceed then to show,

II. From what his blood cleanses – from sin, from **all** sin.

Sin, the most potent enemy, and perpetual plague of a new man in Christ, is that most monstrous, detestable thing, which no terms can ever fully define, nor language, the most powerful and expressive, ever sufficiently reprobate!

Those who daily feel, and lament the power and plague of sin, alone, are able to form any idea of its nauseousness, filthiness, and mischievous, malevolent, and direful effects! Sin, dwelling within him, was the greatest enemy Paul ever met with, and the heaviest burden he ever complained of, or groaned under. Though, in other instances, he endured much, we scarcely hear a complaint.

He tells us himself, of his amazing sufferings from the cruelty of the Jews, from whom he had received many *stripes*, and buffetings; and from hunger and nakedness – "but, none of these things, saith he, move me"; "I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content," (a lesson we can learn as soon as Paul, when it pleases the Lord to teach us). – He appears in the midst of

all, to make no kind of complaint; cheerfully submitting to the will of the Lord. But, when this grand enemy, **sin**, attacked him, got him down, wounded, and stripped his soul of spiritual delights, his anguish was extreme; his sorrows swell too enormously for mental detention, he must give them vent by an exclamation the most bitter, and a metaphor the most nauseously and horribly striking – "*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" Rom. 7:24.

On no other occasion, that I know of, did Paul call himself a *wretch*. An apostle, and yet a *wretched man*! O the bitterness and plague of indwelling sin, to the regenerated soul! Comparable to a putrefied carcass, chained to a living man; after the cruel punishment inflicted on culprits in some of the Eastern nations.

Sin is that diabolic poison, which, upon all occasions, embitters the cup of human life, and produces the most pungent and melancholy woes!

It is that cloud of darkness which has overspread the universe, and thrown all the posterity of *Adam* into an abyss of the extremest ignorance of God and truth! It is that cloud, that thick cloud, which veils the Christian mind with gloominess, and hides from him the light and beauty of the Sun of Righteousness! A cloud, which none but the Lord can remove; and which, according to his own declaration, he has done, for his dear people, by the shedding of his blood, and often chases away, by the brightness of his appearance: "I have, saith the Lord, blotted out, as a *thick cloud*, thy transgressions, and as a *cloud* thy sins: return unto me for I have redeemed thee" – Isa. 44:22.

It is that hell-born tyrant, which usurps dominion over every human soul, and holds them all, bound in adamant chains, its servile and perpetual slaves!

Who, then, that knows sin, can love it, show it any favor, or give it any quarters?

The *New Man* has an everlasting hatred to sin, and can no more be reconciled to it, than a slave to his chains, or a person of a

most delicate appetite, to feeding upon the most *putrefied* human body!

It has marred the most beautiful part of God's creation, spread devastation round the globe, and brought ruin upon an universe of men and women! Nay, more, it has, doubtless, consigned to the regions of everlasting misery, thousands and thousands of souls, who are justly suffering the punishment proportioned by inflexible justice, to their demerit, and sinful deserts! But, above all, O ye believers in Jesus! it has put to death, to the most ignominious, painful, and unparalleled death, the Son of God! Who was led as a sheep to the slaughter, by a banditti of sin's slaves, that imbrued their hands in his most precious blood!

Sin nailed him to the cross, pierced his hands and feet, wrung his soul with anguish never felt before, and produced the indignant sword of justice, which entered his affectionate heart!

Sin! hateful monster of innumerable and untold cruelties! which causes our hearts to ache, by perpetually interrupting our comforts, and promoting our afflictions and sorrows! – It shall not always reign! Blessed be God for the unspeakable gift of his dear and well beloved Son! who hath, by his sufferings and atonement, taken away, and cleansed us from, all our sin!

We yet lament its plague and power, and the many innovations, and grievous inroads which it makes upon us: but, notwithstanding its molestations, and inimical hostility to our best interests, we triumph over it, as a *vanquished* enemy; which, however it may grieve, shall never be able to injure our *new man*: for, "Sin shall not have dominion over you," is the gracious promise. However it may fight and rage, and even though you feel it a whole *putrid* body, it shall not have dominion – it shall not, it cannot *conquer* and *govern* the hidden man of the heart; who never will give approbation, nor consent to the *reign of sin*; although our old man, who is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ever loves it, and most strongly pleads for its sole, and absolute dominion.

But it never can be said that dominion is obtained, till the party to be subdued strikes colors, lays down arms, and, with a

discontinuation of defensive exertions, quietly reigns, with acknowledgements of being completely conquered, swearing, through necessity, allegiance to the conqueror.

This our *new man* will never do: and till that is done, sin can never be said to have dominion over you, though it dwells in your hearts.

As soon shall heaven and hell be reconciled, become one, and shake hands in friendly union, as the *Flesh* and the *Spirit*; for "these are contrary the one to the other" (Gal. 5:17); so that we may, each one, for ourselves, safely, and fairly conclude with the apostle, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the *mind* I myself serve the law of God; but with the *flesh* the law of sin" (Rom. 7:24).

I shall now proceed to consider the subject more *doctrinally*, and with a triumph over sin, through my dear bleeding Lord, to give such a definition of it, as the Lord may enable me, for his glory, to give, upon the ground of *scriptural* representation. What the Scriptures declare, I wish, upon all occasions, positively to affirm: and upon that consideration shall say,

1st. *Sin* is the transgression of the law. "Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4).

Every action, word, or thought, hostile to the divine purity, incompatible with the most unimpeachable justice, and derogatory to infinite and everlasting holiness, is justly denominated *Sin*: and as "by the law is the knowledge of sin," such an hostility to immaculate purity, such incompatibility with strict and undeviating justice, is very rightly called, the transgression of the law: and, therefore, every thing which is a violation of that infinitely holy law, whether an action, an expression, or a thought, exposes a sinner to all that fiery condemnation, and those vengeful curses, which it so inflexibly, and awfully denounces against those "who continue not in all things written therein, to do them."

"All unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:7); the least unrighteousness, if only in a thought, deviating from unspotted

holiness, is a flagrant violation of God's law: for "he who offends in one point is guilty of all"; and as "in many things we all offend," I may fairly infer,

First, The utter impossibility of salvation by works, or the deeds of the law; and *Second*, The absolute necessity of Christ's fulfilling the law, punctually and completely, in order to our deliverance from its curse, and the tyrannic dominion and dreadful consequences of *sin*; or, in other words, he must take the offences of his people into his own account, and endure the penalty threatened and incurred, to procure their discharge, and bring them into the presence of his Father, without a sinful spot, a dishonorable blemish, or so much as a wrinkle in any one part!

For except sin is cleansed away, even though the Lord loves his people unremittingly and everlastingly, He cannot, consistently with his holiness, take possession of them; neither can they enter into his divine and glorious presence.

2nd. Sin hath usurped sovereign, and absolute dominion over all mankind: and, so clearly is this melancholy truth stated in Scripture, and confirmed by the ravages which sin has made in the world, as well as, secretly, in our experience, that I do not hesitate to pronounce man, not only a willing slave to sin, but so securely bound in its massy chains, that he is incapable, even when the Lord hath given him a will, of leaving its vassalage, and detestable servitude. This the inspired Paul, after the most critical examination, found to be the melancholy fact: "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me," Rom. 7:21. "For," saith he, at another time, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God," 2 Cor. 3:5. Where, then, is the boasted free-will of man, to obey and love God, and, believingly, to embrace the Great Saviour of sinners? If man's heart is thus deceitful above all things, desperately wicked, and a source of every thing vile and iniquitous, where are those pure streams of inherent holiness, fleshly sanctification, and natural love to God, which we are, sometimes, gravely told, are produced by some holy people, as an essential

recommendation to God, and an indispensable preparation for death and glory? Such a boast of *free-will*, such pretensions to creature-goodness, and inherent righteousness, in my opinion, stand among the most lucid evidences of sin's dominion 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 veil 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 6:44. 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" (Dan. 12:10): and, that Christ the Lord, the messenger of the Covenant, was to perform this great work, is evident from Mal. 3:3, "And he shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering of righteousness." This is corroborated by Isaiah, "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities," Isa. 53:5. His blood is "The fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness," Zech. 13:1. 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 2:14.

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 dishonor 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 10:11-28). That he hath purchased his church with his own blood (Acts 20:28). That he gave himself for

it (Eph. 5:25), and that his church is not the world at large, but chosen out of the world (John 15:19); 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 (Isa. 53).

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 (Eph. 1:7). If Jesus hath thus taken the sins of his people upon himself (and that he has is evident, see 1 Pet. 2:24 and 3:18), 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," (Rom. 8:34). 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. *Its 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 Pet. 1:2, Heb. 12:24); 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 (Ex. 12:13). "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," Rev. 1:5.

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, Eph. 2:13. *Made* nigh – not made *himself* nigh by his own preparation, 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 magnificent, 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, 5:16).

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 reanimates 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 vigor in the divine life. We eat his flesh, we *drink his blood!* (John 6:54). 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 rekindles, 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 might and malicious "accuser of the brethren" (Rev. 12:11). "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 1:5). I abhor myself (Job 42:6); and esteem my righteousness as filthy rags (Isa. 44:6), loss, and dung, that I may win Christ (Phil. 3:8). "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 Cor. 15:57.

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 Pet. 1:2.

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 labors. 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 Matt. 12:31-32, 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 willfully, 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 favor, 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 honor 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 for 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 uncancelable 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 willfully; 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 Pet. 2:1).

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 1:8): and, admitting they sin, it follows, of course, that they must sin willfully (*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 showing 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 (Ps. 110:3). 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 (Phil. 2:13). 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 1:13), 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."