

# The Entire Pardon and Justification of the Believing Sinner

by Octavius Winslow

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*The sermon emphasizes the doctrine of Christ's Atonement in its especial and gracious design, and how it is a full and entire blotting out of the sins of the believer.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 103:12, Isaiah 44:22, Isaiah 53:5, Jeremiah 33:8, Zechariah 13:1, Romans 5:6, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 9:14, 1 John 4:10

**Topics:** "Atonement", "Justification"

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## Description

Octavius Winslow emphasizes the profound nature of Christ's Atonement, asserting that true understanding of this doctrine requires a spiritually renewed mind. He explains that the Atonement is not merely a theoretical concept but a heartfelt truth that reveals the depth of human sin and the necessity of Christ's sacrifice for complete justification. Winslow argues that the Atonement offers an entire pardon for all sins, highlighting the importance of recognizing one's own sinfulness to fully appreciate the grace of God. He encourages believers to embrace the fullness of their justification in Christ, which leads to peace, sanctification, and a deeper relationship with God. Ultimately, he calls for a humble and honest confession of sin, assuring that God's readiness to forgive is rooted in His infinite love and grace.

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## Transcript

"The Speciality of the Design of the Atonement"

"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness." - Zech. xiii. 1.

We have already, in the opening chapter of this work, remarked upon the incompetency of natural reason to understand spiritual truth: neither the nature, the harmony, or the end of Divine truth can it discern. This incapacity may be traced, not to a deficiency of mental endowment, or to the extreme abstruseness of revelation, for the weakest intellect, enlightened and sanctified by the Spirit of God, may grasp the profoundest doctrine in the great system of theology, so far as the revelation of that doctrine extends- but to the lack of a spiritually-renewed mind.

This is the cause and this only. There is the mind, and there is the truth; the one vigorous, the other lucid; and yet there is no sympathy the one with the other. How, on other grounds, can it be accounted for?

There is no spiritual taste for the investigation of God's holy Word. The moral tone of the mind harmonizes not with its holy and lofty themes. The one is on the side of holiness, the other on the side of sin. The one asserts the authority and spirituality of the law, the other assumes the attitude of hostility to that law.

Where then is the affinity? where the sympathy? On other subjects it may be at home; here, it is tossed upon an open sea. In the investigation of other themes, it may prove itself a giant in power; here, it betrays the feebleness of a dwarf. It follows then, as a self-evident truth, that the mind must be changed, and changed by God himself, before Divine truth will either be understood or received. Hence we find the Apostle, in behalf of the Ephesian Christian thus praying: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened."

Eph. i. 17, 18. Of all the doctrines of the Gospel, thus dark and inexplicable to an unrenewed mind, is the doctrine of Christ's Atonement in its especial and gracious design. This can only be understood by a mind awakened to the nature and turpitude of their personal sin. As the expiation of sin was the great design of Christ's wondrous death, so no individual, thus ignorant of sin, however vast his mental powers, and however firm his belief in the truth of Divine revelation, can discover and welcome this truth.

We speak not, and need we again assure the reader, of mere theoretical views of truth. O no! We speak of a higher grade of knowledge than this. There is as wide a difference as possibly can be, between a reception of the truth in the judgment, and the reception of the truth in the heart. Let no man be deceived. To deceive others is awful- but to deceive one-self; more awful yet! It is to this natural darkness, this ignorance of sin, this lack of the Spirit's teaching, that we are to attribute all the false and erroneous views that men have advanced touching the nature and design of Christ's death.

It is our solemn belief, that all error in theology, especially that which undermines the Atonement, has its rise in the setting aside the law of God. Let the law be fully recognized in its Divine authority, its inflexible dignity, and its spotless purity; let its condemnatory sentence be felt in the soul; let all hope of justification by its obedience be swept away, and let the sinner stand forth in the full blaze of its terrors; and then will be seen the absolute necessity of an Atonement, and precisely such an Atonement as the adorable Redeemer offered upon the cross.

No individual then, taught by the Spirit, who is emphatically designated "The Spirit of Truth,"- made to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin as against a holy God- emptied of all self-sufficiency- the eye open to the inward plague, and laid prostrate in the dust as a poor, broken-hearted sinner- no individual thus taught, would ever affirm that Jesus died with any other design than that for which he did die, that is, to offer to Divine Justice a full and infinite satisfaction for sin.

This brings us to the immediate discussion of the subject. May we feel, that the ground on which we now stand, is holy. If there be a subject, the consideration of which we should approach with caution, humility, and prayer, it is this. May our hearts be lifted up to God for the teachings of his Spirit, whose blessed office, in the economy of grace, it is to glorify Christ, "taking of the things that belong to him, and showing them to the soul." John xvi. 14. O for his holy anointing, while we treat of this stupendous subject- Christ presenting himself a sacrifice for sin!

For the purpose of presenting the subject clearly before the mind of the reader, we shall first adduce those prominent portions of God's Word, which declare the end and design of Christ's death to be an Atonement for sin; it will then be appropriate to show that the Atonement of Christ is a full and entire blotting out of the

sins of his people; this will prepare us to glance at the great covenant blessings which an experimental belief of this truth conveys into the soul. The Word of God, the only rule of faith and duty, distinctly and invariably represents the death of Jesus as a sacrifice, and the especial and gracious design of that sacrifice, an Atonement for sin.

If this is denied, how are we to interpret the following remarkable passages? "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Isa. liii. 5. "The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Ver. 6. "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matt. xxvi. 28. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

Rom. v. 6. "He has made him to be sin (or a sin offering) for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 21. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Eph. i. 7. "Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Heb. ix. 13, 14. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John iv. 10. How perfectly unintelligible these declarations of God's Word, if we regard them not as so many affirmations of the great doctrine in question!

Let not the reader turn away from God's Word. If he be a disbeliever in the doctrine of Christ's vicarious sufferings, let him be cautious how he tampers with these solemn declarations. They affirm the doctrine of the Atonement, or nothing at all. They possess no meaning if interpreted in any other light. Recur again to the amazing expressions- "Wounded for our transgressions." "Bruised for our iniquities." On him the "iniquity of us all." "Blood shed for the remission of sins" "Died for the ungodly."

"Made sin." "Through his blood the forgiveness of sins." "Propitiation for our sins." What see we here, but the Atoning blood- the full satisfaction- the bearing of sin- the surety, the substitute? And how shall we account for the sufferings of Christ, which were intense, and mysterious, if not on the ground of their vicarious character? Those sufferings were intense in the extreme. There was a severity in those who, if not required by Divine justice, would be perfectly unaccountable.

Heaven, Earth, and Hell, all were in league against him. Survey his eventful history mark every step which he took from Bethlehem to Calvary; and what do we learn of his sufferings, but that they were of the most extraordinary and intense character? His enemies, like dogs of war, were let loose upon him. His professed followers themselves stood aghast at the scenes through which their Lord was passing- one betraying him, another denying him, and all, in the hour of his extremity, forsaking him.

Is it any wonder that, in the anguish of his soul, his suffering humanity should exclaim, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." In that awful moment, all the waves and billows of God's wrath, due to the sins of his people, were passing over him. The Father, the last resource of sympathy, veiled his face, and withdrew from him his sensible presence, and on the cross, draining the cup of sorrow, he fulfilled the prophecy which spoke of him- "I have trodden the wine-press

alone; and of the people there were none with me." Isa. lxiii. 3.

His sufferings, too, were mysterious. Why a holy, harmless Being, whose whole life had been one act of unparalleled beneficence, should be doomed to persecution so severe, to sufferings so acute, and to a death so painful and ignominious, the denier of the atonement must be embarrassed to account. But the doctrine of a vicarious sacrifice explains it all, and presents the only key to the mystery. "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 21. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Gal. iii. 13. All the mystery now is gone. He was "made sin for us." He was "made a curse for us." He bore the sin, and consequently the penalty of sin. Had we been left, Christian reader, to bear our sins, we must inevitably have borne alone the punishment of our sins. But Jesus took upon him our sins. For this, he became a party in the covenant of redemption; for this, he assumed our nature; for this, he sorrowed in Gethsemane; for this, the law of God exacted its utmost claim; and for this, the justice of God inflicted the utmost penalty. O what a truth is this! The Son of God offering himself up a sacrifice for sin! He who knew no sin; who was holy, harmless, and undefiled; not one thought of evil in his heart, yet made sin, or a sin-offering!

O the bigness of the thought! If God had not himself declared it, we could not have believed it, though an angel's trumpet had announced it. God himself must proclaim it; and because he has so proclaimed it, we believe it. And God alone can write it upon the heart. 'O blessed and adorable Immanuel! and was this the end and design of your intense and mysterious sufferings? Was it that you should obey, bear the sin, endure the curse, and bow your head in death, that I might go free? Was it in my stead, and in my behalf? O unexampled love! O infinite and free grace! That God should become incarnate: that the Holy One should so take upon Him sin, as to be dealt with by stern justice as though He were Himself the sinner: that He should drain the cup of wrath, give his back to the smiter, endure the shame and the spitting, and at last be suspended upon the cross, and pour out his last drop of most precious blood- and all this for me- for me a rebel- for me a worm for me the chief of sinners! Be astonished, O heavens! and be amazed, O earth! Was ever love like this?'

It will now be appropriate to show from God's Word, that the Atonement of the blessed Redeemer was a full and entire blotting out of the sins of the believer. Need we say anything upon the vast importance of this truth? Need we say how closely it stands connected with the peace, the sanctification, and the eternal glory, of the sinner that hangs on Christ? Let not the reader be satisfied to rest upon the mere surface of the truth, that Christ has made an Atonement for sin; this may be believed, and yet the full blessedness, peace, and sanctification of it not enjoyed. And why? Because he enters not fully into the experience of the truth. Shall we not say, too, because his views of sin rest but on the surface of sin's exceeding sinfulness? Deep views of sin will ever result in deep views of the Sacrifice for sin. Inadequate knowledge of sin result in inadequate knowledge of Christ. Low views of self result in high views of Christ. Be satisfied then not to rest upon the surface of this wondrous truth. May God the Eternal Spirit now lead us into it!

Before we consider the completeness of Christ's Atonement, it may be proper to glance at the BASIS OR CAUSE of that completeness. This arises from the infinite dignity of his Person: his Godhead forms the basis of his perfect work. It guarantees, so to speak, the glorious result of his Atonement. It was this that gave perfection to his obedience, and virtue to his Atonement: it was this that made the blood He shed efficacious in the pardon of sin, and the righteousness He wrought out complete in the justification of the soul.

His entire work would have been lacking, but for his Godhead. No created Savior- that dream of the Socinian- could have given full satisfaction to an infinite law, broken by man, and calling aloud for vengeance. How could such a sacrifice, as we would suppose a created Savior to offer, have "magnified the law, and made it honorable?" utterly impossible! A finite being had broken it- an infinite Being must repair it. An obedience was required, in every respect equal in glory and dignity to the law that was violated.

The rights of the Divine government must be maintained, the purity of the Divine nature must be guarded, and the honor of the Divine law must be vindicated. To accomplish this, God himself must become flesh, and to carry this fully out, the incarnate God must die! O depth of wisdom and of grace! O love infinite, love rich, love free! Love... "Not to be thought on, but with tides of joy, Not to be mentioned, but with shouts of praise." Stamped, as the work of Christ is, with the infinite glory and dignity of his Godhead, it will now be an easy and a delightful task to trace its perfection, as it is seen first, in the entire blotting out of all sin, and second, in the complete justification of the person.

The pardon of a believer's sins is AN ENTIRE PARDON. It is the full pardon of all his sins. It were no pardon to him if it were not an entire pardon. If it were but a partial blotting out of the thick cloud- if it were but a partial cancelling of the debt- if it were but a forgiveness of some sins only- then the Gospel were not be glad tidings to his soul. The law of God has brought him in guilty of an entire violation. The justice of God demands a satisfaction equal to the enormity of the sins committed, and of the guilt incurred.

The Holy Spirit has convinced him of his utter helplessness, his entire bankruptcy. What rapture would kindle in his bosom at the announcement of a mere partial atonement of a half Savior- of a partial payment of the debt? Not one throb of joyous sensation would it produce. On the contrary, this very mockery of his woe would but deepen the anguish of his spirit. But, go to the soul, weary and heavy laden with sin- mourning over its vileness, its helplessness, and proclaim the Gospel.

Tell him that the Atonement which Jesus offered on Calvary was a full satisfaction for his sins. That all his sins were borne and blotted out in that awful moment. That the bond which Divine justice held against the sinner was fully cancelled by the obedience and sufferings of Christ, and that, appeased and satisfied, God was "ready to pardon." How beautiful will be the feet that convey to him tidings so transporting as this! And are not these statements perfectly accordant with the declarations of God's own Word?

Let us ascertain. What was the ark symbolical of, alluded to by the Apostle, in the ninth chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, which contained the manna, Aaron's rod, and the tables of the covenant, over which stood the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat? What, but the entire covering of sin? For, as the covering of the ark did hide the law and testimony, so did the Lord Jesus Christ hide the sins of his chosen, covenant people; not from the eye of God's omniscience, but from the eye of the law.

They stand legally acquitted. So entire was the work of Jesus, so infinite and satisfactory his obedience, the law of God pronounces them acquitted- and can never bring them into condemnation. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died." How could the Apostle, with any truth, have made a declaration so astounding, and uttered a challenge so dauntless as this, if the point we are now endeavoring to establish were not strictly as we affirm it to be?

And does not the phraseology which the Holy Spirit employs in announcing the doctrine of Divine forgiveness confirm the statement we have made? "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your

transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed you." Isa. xlv. 22. Where would be the constraining power of the motive to "return" to God, but on the ground of a full and entire blotting out of all sin? This it is that subdues, overcomes, and wins back God's wandering child.

This it is that abases the soul- deepens the conviction of its vileness, makes the sin of departure, of ingratitude, of rebellion, so abhorrent, when on the broad basis of a full and free blotting out of sin, God bids the soul "return." 'I have blotted out all your sins, therefore return. Though you have gone after other lovers- though you have departed from me- forgotten and forsaken me, yet have I blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions: return, for I have redeemed you.'

Again: "In those days, and in that time, with the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." Jer. 1. 20. "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Micah vii. 19. What an astounding truth is contained in these two passages! In the one it is declared, that if the iniquity of Israel, and the sin of Judah, be sought for, they shall not be found.

So entire was the blotting out, so glorious was the work of Jesus, so perfect his obedience, that if the eye of God's holy law searches- and where can it not penetrate? it cannot discover them. In the other, it is declared, that, so fathomless are the depths of that sea of atoning blood, which Christ has poured out, that in it are cast, never to be found again, all the sins of the believer. So that the trembling soul may exclaim, "You have in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for you have cast all my sins behind your back."

Isa. xxxviii. 17. And who can read, without deep emotion, these affecting announcements by the God of heaven? Gently chiding his wayward, yet beloved people, he says: "But, my dear people, you refuse to ask for my help. You have grown tired of me! You have not brought me lambs for burnt offerings. You have not honored me with sacrifices, though I have not burdened and wearied you with my requests for grain offerings and incense. You have not brought me fragrant incense or pleased me with the fat from sacrifices.

Instead, you have burdened me with your sins and wearied me with your faults. I--yes, I alone--am the one who blots out your sins for my own sake and will never think of them again." Isaiah 43:22-25. "I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me." Jer. xxxiii. 8. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases.

For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." Psalm. ciii. 2, 3, 11, 12. Look up, you saints of God, who are disconsolate through fear of condemnation. See all your sins charged to the account of your mighty Surety. Yes, see them all laid upon him as your Substitute. See him bearing them away- sinking them in the ocean of his blood- casting them behind his back.

Look up and rejoice! Let not the indwelling of sin, the remains of corruption, cause you to overlook this amazing truth- the entire blotting out of all your sins, through the atoning blood of your adorable Immanuel. It is truth, and it is your privilege to live in the holy enjoyment of it. Fully received into the heart, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, its tendency will be of the most holy, sanctifying, abasing character. It will weaken the power of sin- it will draw up the heart in pantings for Divine conformity- it will deaden the

influence of the objects of sense- expel the love of the world and of self- impart tenderness to the conscience, and cause the soul to go softly- "Walking worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

Col. i. 10. Before we pass to an experimental view of the kindred, though distinct doctrine of justification, we would beg the Christian reader's serious attention to a subject of the greatest importance, and yet one much overlooked- we allude to the intimate connection between a daily habit of confession of sin, and the application of the atoning blood to the conscience. This is a point of deep significance- and for the lack of clear and scriptural views of it- or from not having seriously considered it at all, the believer in Christ walks for days, and it may be, months, without the blood upon the conscience.

The sympathy between the soul's deep and humble confession of sin and the sense of the blotting out of that sin, is great. God has so ordained it. In turning to the book of Leviticus xvi. 21, we find a beautiful and striking illustration of this important point. Thus we read: "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness."

Here was the confession of sin and the pardon of sin, closely and beautifully blended. The one would have been useless if separated from the other. There could be no pardon without confession, and the mere confession, without the bearing away of sin, would have availed nothing in averting God's holy displeasure. In the first Epistle of John, this Apostle thus writes- ver. 8, 9.- "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Observe the close relation in this passage- "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

Let us unfold some of the evils that result from a neglect of this duty, and some of the blessings that result from its observance. Sin unconfessed, tends to remove that holy familiarity which ought always to subsist between God and the believer. This communion is of the tenderest kind. The communion between a called, pardoned, and adopted child, and its heavenly Father, is more close and endearing than even that between a mother and her first-born child. Standing in the righteousness of the adorable Immanuel, the Father opens, without reservation, all his heart- pours down the ocean fulness of his love- communes by the inward voice of the indwelling Spirit and draws up the affections to Himself.

Who can fully enter into that amazing expression of the Apostle's, "Beloved of God"? On God's part, too, how precious is his own work in the soul of his child. That lowly view of self- that contrite sigh- that broken heart- that faint and feeble longing for Christ- that hungering and thirsting for righteousness- that poverty of spirit- those broken accents of prayer- that feeble lisping of a child, "Abba, Father!" O how unutterably dear is it all to the heart of God! But let the spiritual reader imagine how much of this holy communion is destroyed, and this confidence weakened, by the remains of guilt upon the conscience, through the neglect of a full and free confession of sin.

A sense of guilt upon the conscience invariably occasions distant views of God. The moment Adam became conscious of having sinned, he hid himself from God's eye. He sought concealment from the endearing presence of Him who had been wont to walk in the cool of evening through the bowers of paradise, in sweet and confiding communion. It is so now. Guilt upon the conscience, sin unconfessed, imparts misty, gloomy, distorted views of God. We lose that clear endearing view of his character, which

we once had.

We dare not look up with holy, humble boldness. We misinterpret his dealings- think harshly of his ways- and if providences are dark, and afflictions come, in a moment we exclaim, 'I have sinned, and God is angry.' And so we seek concealment from God. We sink the Father in the judge, and the child in the slave. Another evil that results from sin unconfessed is, the hardening tendency it produces upon the conscience. To a child of God who has felt and mourned over the power of sin, we need not stay to prove how hardening is the tendency of sin.

How it crusts the heart with a callousness which no human power can soften; and which often requires heavy affliction to remove. Where a child of God, then, neglects the habit of a daily confession of sin, by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, the conscience loses its tenderness, and becomes, by this gradual process, so hardened, as at length to think nothing of a sin which at one period would have filled the soul with horror and remorse. One more evil we may mention, and that is, that a neglect of this most important duty causes a fearful forgetfulness of sin, without the sweet sense of its forgiveness.

The believer loses sight of his sin, not because he knows it to be pardoned, afresh blotted out, but from a mere carnal forgetfulness of the sin. The child of God on whose conscience the atoning blood has been afresh sprinkled, cannot soon forget his sin. O no! Freed from a sense of its condemnation, delivered from its guilt, and looking up to the unclouded face of a reconciled God, yet he remembers how far he could depart from the God that so loved him, and so readily and freely forgave him.

The very pardon of his sin stamps it upon his memory. He thinks of it, only to admire the love, and adore the grace, and extol the blood that blotted it out- and thus he is led to go softly all his days. "My soul has them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me." Lam. iii. 20. But the believer who neglects the duty and the privilege of confession, loses the remembrance of his sin, until brought under the rod of the covenant; then some deep and heavy chastisement recalls it to his memory, and fills him with shame, humiliation, and contrition.

In this state, the Eternal Spirit comes into the soul with his restoring mercies, leads the abased and humbled believer afresh to the "fountain opened"- God the God of all comfort, speaks in language of comfort and says, "I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall know that I am the Lord: that you may remember, and be confounded, and never open your mouth any more because of your shame, when I am pacified toward you for all that you have done, says the Lord God." Ezek. xvi. 62, 63.

THE BLESSINGS that result from a strict observance of daily confession of sin, are rich and varied. We would present them as in one group. The conscience retains its tender susceptibility of guilt. Just as a breath will tarnish a mirror highly polished, so will the slightest aberration of the heart from God- the smallest sin, leaves its impression upon a conscience in the habit of a daily unburdening itself in confession, and of a daily washing in the fountain. Going thus to God, and acknowledging iniquity over the head of Immanuel- pleading the atoning blood- the conscience retains its tenderness and its sensitiveness- and sin, all sin, is viewed as that which God hates, and the soul abhors.

This habit too, keeps, so to speak, a clear account between God and the believer. Sins daily and hourly committed are not forgotten- they fade not from the mind, and therefore they need not the correcting rod to recall them to remembrance. For let us not forget, God will eventually bring our sins to remembrance. "He will call to remembrance the iniquity." Ezek. xxi. 23. David had forgotten his sin against God, and his treacherous conduct to Uriah, until God sent the prophet Nathan to bring his iniquity to remembrance.

A daily confession then of sin, a daily washing in the fountain, will preserve the believer from many and perhaps deep afflictions. This was David's testimony- "I acknowledged my sin unto you, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin." Ps. xxxii. 5. See, then, the close connection between an honest and minute confession of sin, and the application of the precious blood of Christ. Let the child of God be encouraged to take all his sins to his heavenly Father.

Have you sinned? Have you taken a single step in departure from God? Is there the slightest consciousness of guilt? Go at once to the throne of grace- stay not until you find some secret place for confession- stay not until you are alone; lift up your heart at once to God, and confess your sin with the hand of faith upon the great atoning Sacrifice. Open all your heart to him. Do not be afraid of a full and honest confession. Shrink not from unfolding its most secret recesses- lay all bare before his eyes.

Do you think he will turn from the exposure? Do you think he will close his ear against your breathings? O no! Listen to his own encouraging, persuasive declarations- "Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, backsliding Israel, says the Lord; and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, says the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God." Jer. iii. 12, 13.

"O Israel, return unto the Lord your God, for you have fallen by your iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously." Hos. xiv. 1, 2. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for my anger is turned away from him." Ver. 4. O what words are these! Does the eye of the poor backslider fall on this page? And as he now reads of God's readiness to pardon- of God's willingness to receive back the repenting prodigal- of his yearning after his wandering child- feels his heart melted, his soul subdued, and struck with that amazing declaration, "Only acknowledge your iniquity" would dare creep down at his feet, and weep, and mourn, and confess.

O is there one such now reading this page? then return, my brother, return! God, the God against whom you have sinned, says, "Return." Your Father, the Father from whom you have wandered, is looking out for the first return of your soul, for the first kindlings of godly sorrow, for the first confession of sin. Return, my brother, return! God has not turned his back upon you, though you have turned your back upon him. God has not forgotten to be gracious, though you have forgotten to be faithful.

"I remember you,"- is his own touching language- "the kindness of your youth, the love of your espousals." Jer. ii. 2. O! then, come back; this moment, come back; the fountain is still open- Jesus is still the same- the blessed and Eternal Spirit, loving and faithful as ever- God ready to pardon. Take up then the language of the prodigal and say, "I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son."

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We now proceed to SHOW HOW FULL AND ENTIRE IS THE JUSTIFICATION OF A BELIEVER. This will not require much amplification- seeing that, if the pardon of a believing sinner is a full and entire forgiveness it follows that, so must be his justification. They both result from the same glorious cause- the perfection of our adorable Lord's obedience. Let us briefly enquire what we are to understand by the righteousness of Christ imputed to a believer, and thus constituting the sole ground of his acceptance.

It is not our intention to view the subject metaphysically, but in the clear light of God's own Word. We deprecate the introduction of a metaphysical and scholastic mode of reasoning in the exhibition of Divine truth. God's Word does not require it; it is quite unnecessary in the investigation of the mind of the Spirit. The evils, too, resulting from it, are many and dangerous. God's Word is obscured, mystified, and often its simple meaning fearfully perverted. The mind in search of the truth, not being able to follow a metaphysical argument, or to comprehend the meaning of a scholastic term, becomes perplexed, embarrassed, and discouraged, and at length gives up the investigation.

May it not be a subject of important enquiry how far the pulpit and the press, in their efforts to diffuse evangelical knowledge, may be chargeable with the adoption of a mode of discussing religious truth, far removed from the beautiful simplicity of the Gospel, and tending to mar its beauty, pervert its meaning, and impart to the learner crude and misty views of Divine truth? Confident are we, that that ministry would come clothed with most unction, and that treatise would be read with more blessing, and that believer would walk more in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, where God's Word was most honored, most prayerfully studied, and most studiously followed.

This Book tells best and simplest its own wondrous story. But to return from this digression. We mean by JUSTIFICATION, or rather, we would say, the Word of God means by Gospel justification, the imputation of Christ's infinite and finished righteousness to a repenting, believing sinner; the making over of his perfect obedience in behalf of his church to him that believes. Christ obeyed not for himself, but for his Church. It is an absurdity to suppose that he obeyed the law for himself- the law of God demanded no personal obedience from Christ- for he was perfectly holy, had never sinned, had never broken the law: and to suppose the law exacting obedience, and holding out its threats to a being who was immaculately holy, and therefore had never incurred its penalty, is to take a most obscure and defective view of truth.

True, Christ was made under the law, but it was "to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. iv. 4, 5. If he was obligated to do anything for himself, as under the personal curse of the law, then he became incarnate for himself, obeyed for himself, endured the curse for himself, suffered for himself, died and rose again for himself. As made under the law, true, he was bound to obey, in its every iota, that law, but it was for the people for whom he had entered into a covenant engagement with the Father.

In their behalf he kept the Law- for it was not possible that he could himself break it- Satan came, tried, and tempted him, and found nothing in him. John xiv. 30. In their behalf he endured the curse, and suffered the penalty. And on the ground of his obedience- his obedience, or righteousness imputed to them, in the same manner in which their sins were imputed to him- they stand before God, the holy, the heart-searching God, fully and freely "justified from all things." "For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin," (there is the imputation of our sins to him,) "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (there is the imputation of his righteousness to us). 2 Cor. v. 21.

"He is the kind of high priest we need because he is holy and blameless, unstained by sin. He has now been set apart from sinners, and he has been given the highest place of honor in heaven. He does not need to offer sacrifices every day like the other high priests. They did this for their own sins first and then for the sins of the people. But Jesus did this once for all when he sacrificed himself on the cross." Hebrews 7:26-27. With this explanation of the doctrine, let us proceed to unfold it.

The righteousness wrought out by the incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ, is a most glorious righteousness. It took in the whole law of God. It did not soften down, or ask for a compromise of its claims. It took the law in its utmost strictness and honored it. It gave all the law demanded, all it could demand. And what stamped this righteousness with a glory so great? what enabled the Redeemer to offer an obedience so perfect? What, but that he was God in our nature!

The Law-giver became the Law-fulfiller. The God became the Substitute- the judge became the Surety. Behold, then, the justification of a believing sinner! He stands accepted in the righteousness of Christ with full and entire acceptance. What says the Holy Spirit? "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." Isa. xlv. 25. "And by him (the Lord Jesus) all who believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Acts xiii. 39. "Accepted in the Beloved." Ephes. i. 6. "And you are complete through your union with Christ. He is the Lord over every ruler and authority in the universe." Col. 2:10 "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having a spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. v. 25- 27.

"He has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 21. Mark the expression, "Made the righteousness of God"! So called because the righteousness which Christ wrought out was a Divine righteousness, not the righteousness of a created being, of an angel, or of a superior prophet, else it were blasphemy to call it "the righteousness of God." O no! the righteousness in which you stand, if you "are accepted in the Beloved," is a more costly and glorious righteousness than Adam's, or the highest angel in glory: it is "the righteousness of God."

The righteousness of the God-Man; possessing all the infinite merit, and glory, and perfection of Deity. And what seems still more incredible, the believer is made the righteousness of God in Christ. Made that righteousness, so that, beholding him in Christ, the Father can "rest in his love, and rejoice over him with singing." Zech. iii. 17. Is it not then we ask, a perfect, a complete justification? what can be more so? Do not the passages we have quoted prove it? Can any other meaning be given to them, without divesting them of their beauty and obvious sense?

Would it not be to turn from God's word, to dishonor and grieve the Spirit, and to rob the believer of a most influential motive to holiness, were we to take a less expanded view of this subject than that which we have taken? Most assuredly it would. Then let the Christian reader welcome this truth. If it is God's truth, and we humbly believe we have proved it to be so- it is not less his privilege than his duty to receive it. What consideration shall we urge upon him why he should welcome it?

Shall we say his sanctification is intimately connected with it? and what an argument should this be with a child of God! To be holy- to be like God- to be conformed entirely to the will and image of Christ- to have the temper, the taste, the principles, the daily walk- all like our blessed Immanuel, who is "the chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely." O! can a believer aspire to a more lofty aim? And this righteousness- this infinite, this Divine, this finished righteousness, received in the heart by the power of God the Holy Spirit, broken up to the soul, lived upon daily, will promote all this: "In your righteousness shall they be exalted."

Psalms lxxxix. 16. The righteousness of Christ has a most exalting tendency; it exalts a believer's view of God, of his character and perfections; it exalts his view of Jesus, his person, work, and love; it exalts the

believer himself; it takes him out of himself, above and beyond himself; it exalts his principles, his practice, his affections, and conforms him to Christ. Shall we say his happiness is intimately connected with it? And where is the believer that does not desire to walk happily with God?

This is the attainment the world are eagerly in search of- but the believer in Christ is its only possessor; he has found it, and found it in Jesus; he has found it in a renunciation of self-righteousness, and in a humble reception of Christ; and there is no happiness, worthy of the name, that is sought and found outside of Jesus. What true happiness can the heart feel while it is unrenewed, its sins unpardoned, the soul unjustified, and therefore under condemnation, and exposed to the wrath of a holy and just God?

O dream not of happiness, reader, until you have gone as a repenting sinner to the cross of Christ; until the atoning blood has been applied to your conscience, and the Spirit bears his witness to your adoption. If this, and this only, is the source of all true happiness, then the more constantly and closely the believer realizes his full and complete acceptance in the Beloved, the greater must his happiness be. You may be a son or a daughter of affliction; in this furnace you may be chosen, Isa. xlviii. 10, and through this furnace it may be the Lord's holy will you should pass all your days.

You may be a child of poverty, possessing but little of this world's comforts, lonely, neglected, despised. Yet, O look up! you are precious in God's sight dear to him as the apple of his eye; his heart yearns over you with more than a mother's exquisite fondness for her child, because he has loved you with an everlasting love, and, to the praise of the glory of his grace, has "accepted" you "in the Beloved." Eph. i. 6. Realize this, and, though rough and thorny may be your path, and fiery the furnace, and deep your poverty, and lonely your situation, you shall experience a peace, and a happiness, to which the world around you is an utter stranger.

Shall we say, the holy influence which a believer is called to exert around him, will be greatly augmented, and powerfully felt, by an abiding realization of his full and entire acceptance in Christ? The child of God is "the salt of the earth," "the light of the world." He is surrounded by moral putrefaction and darkness. By his holy, consistent example, he is to exert a counteracting influence. He is to be purity where there is corruption, he is to be light where there is darkness.

And if his walk is consistent, if his life is holy, his example tells, and tells powerfully, upon an ungodly world. Saints of God catch, as it were, the contagion of his sanctity. The worldling acknowledges the reality of the Gospel he professes, and the bold sceptic falls back abashed, and feels, "how appropriate goodness is." What then will so elevate his own piety, and increase the power of his influence, as a realization of his justification by Christ? O how this commends the religion of Jesus!

We will suppose a Christian parent surrounded by a large circle of unconverted children. They look to him as to a living Gospel; they look to him for an exemplification of the truth he believes; they expect to see its influence upon his principles, his temper, his affections, his whole conduct. What then must be their impression of the Gospel, if they behold their parent always indulging in doubts as to his acceptance, yielding to unbelieving fears as to his calling? Instead of walking in the full assurance of faith, saying with the apostle, "I know whom I have believed." 2 Tim. i. 12- instead of walking in the holy liberty, peace, and comfort of acceptance, there is nothing but distrust, dread, and tormenting fear.

How many a child has borne this testimony- "The doubts and fears of my parent have been my great stumbling-block!" O then, for the sake of those around you- for the sake of your children, your connections, your friends, your domestics, realize your full, free, and entire acceptance in Christ. Is it any

marvel then- reviewing our ground- that in speaking of his beloved and justified people, God employs in his Word language like this: "All beautiful you are, my darling; there is no flaw in you."

Song 4:7; "He has not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither has he seen perverseness in Israel." Num. xxiii. 21. Carry out this thought. Had there been no iniquity in Jacob? Had there been no perverseness in Israel? Read their histories, and what do they develop but iniquity and perverseness of the most aggravated kind? And yet, that God should say he saw no iniquity in Jacob, and no perverseness in Israel, what does it set forth but the glorious work of the adorable Immanuel- the glory, the fitness, the perfection of that righteousness, in which they stand "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing?"

Eph. v. 27; in themselves vile and worthless- sinful and perverse- deeply conscious before God of possessing not a claim upon his regard, but worthy only of his just displeasure, yet counted righteous in the righteousness of another, fully and freely justified by Christ. Is this doctrine startling to some? Is it considered too great a truth to be received by others? Any other Gospel than this, we solemnly affirm, will never save the soul! The obedience, sufferings, and death of the God-man, made over to the repenting believing sinner, by an act of free and sovereign grace, is the only plank on which the soul can safely rest.

Let it attempt the passage across the cold river of death on any other, and it is gone! On this it may boldly venture, and on this it shall be safely and triumphantly carried into the quiet and peaceful haven of future and eternal blessedness. We acknowledge the magnitude of this doctrine; yet is it not to be rejected because of its greatness. It may be profound, almost too deeply so, for an angel's mind; the cherubim may veil their faces, overpowered with its glory, while yet with eager longings they desire to look into it- still may the weakest saint of God receive it, live upon it, walk in it.

It is "a deep river, through which an elephant might swim, and which a lamb might ford." Nor let any individual slight it, because worldly men have held it in unrighteousness. To the heart of a child of God it should not be the less precious because of this. The abuse of any single truth is no argument against the soundness or utility of that truth: if so, then might we set aside well near every doctrine of the cross, because well near every doctrine of the cross has been abused to unholy purposes.

It is a solemn thing for a believer to overlook any single doctrine, to stand aloof from any single truth of God's holy Word, because the pearl has been trampled under foot of swine- because ungodly men, receiving the truth notionally in the judgment, and not experimentally in the heart, have walked after their own lusts, deceiving and deceived. O no, we look not to them for an exemplification of the great doctrines of grace; nor are we to attribute their abuse of God's truth to the legitimate tendency of the truth itself.

This we assign as a reason why we contend so earnestly for experimental religion: there is no true holiness of heart and of life without it. The mere prater about doctrine, his head filled with notions, and his heart with pride and unmortified sin, may walk in the outward garb of Christianity, deceiving others, and, what at the day of judgment will be most awful, deceiving himself- but the day of separation, the day of sifting, will come, when the wheat will be gathered into the garner, and the chaff will be burned with unquenchable fire.

Let not the reader then turn his back upon a truth, because unholy men have brought it into reproach- then might he turn his back upon Jesus, because of the wounds which, again and again, he has received in the house of his friends. The doctrine of God's eternal, sovereign, and unconditional election of a people, his redemption of them by the sacrifice of his Son Jesus Christ, his particular and effectual calling of them by the Eternal Spirit, their complete pardon and justification, and their preservation to eternal glory- these are

God's truths, and not to be rejected.

They come from God, and, when received in the heart, they lead to God; they have their origin in him, and to him they draw the soul. Precious truths! How they abase the sinner, how they exalt the dear Redeemer; how they glorify God, how they empty, humble, and sanctify the soul! We would not be the individual to speak anything against them, or think slightly of them, no, not for our right hand, or for our right eye. And now, may we not inquire, Have you, dear reader, this robe upon you?

In whose righteousness do you at this moment stand? Is it all merely profession? Startle not at the question- turn not from it- it is for your life we ask it. Do you wonder that such a scrutiny into the ground of your hope should be made? Are you astonished at the solemn fact implied in this question? Do not be so. Many have lived in the mere outward profession- have put on Christ in the external garb have talked well of him- have been baptized in his name- given liberally for his cause, and after all, have gone into eternity holding up the empty lamp!

O marvel not then, that we repeat the question, In whose righteousness do you at this moment stand? Mere profession will not save your soul; your being found mingling among the wise virgins will not secure you an admittance with them into heaven; your talking respectfully of Jesus will avail you nothing; your church memberships, your liberality, your irreproachable deportment, your spotless morality, your regular attendance on the sanctuary, all, all are vain without the justifying righteousness of the God-man upon you.

What do you know of the broken heart and the contrite spirit? What do you know of the healing blood of Jesus? What do you know of a sense of pardon and acceptance? What do you know of the witness of the Spirit? What do you know of a humble, low, abasing view of yourself? What do you know of a holy and a close walk with God? What do you know of communion and fellowship with the Father and his dear Son? In a word, what do you know of yourself as a helpless, ruined sinner, and of Jesus as a rich, able, and present Savior?

Ponder these solemn questions! The hand that pens them trembles with awe as it traces them on this page. This is a day of great profession- a day of great ingathering into the church; a day when much chaff must necessarily be gathered with the wheat. It was so in the primitive days of the church, when apostles, inspired by the Spirit of God, were the men who planted, watered, and gathered in the sheaves. Shall it then be thought a thing incredible with you that, in the present day, the minister may be deceived, and the hearer deceived, and neither of them know it?

It solemnly behooves each professing member of Christ's church, of every name and denomination, narrowly to scrutinize his motives, deeply to probe his heart, and closely and habitually to examine the foundation on which he is building for eternity. Thus shall he walk, if he be an adopted child, in the sweet and holy realization of his pardon and acceptance; thus shall he experience the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; and thus, too, shall he constantly be "a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and fit for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

There are many and peculiar BLESSINGS which an experimental belief and realization of this great truth conveys into the soul, a slight glance at some of which will close this chapter. First, A consciousness of perfect security, and freedom from condemnation. Let us not be misunderstood. We mean not to affirm, that a child of God is secure only as he realizes his pardon and acceptance. Far be it from us to utter a sentiment like this. Many and long are the seasons of spiritual darkness and sensible withdrawments of

God's presence, through which the believer is often called to pass; seasons, during which his hope seems to have perished, Lam. iii. 18; and God, as he believes, has forgotten to be gracious, Ps. lxxvii. 9; seasons, during which he cannot look up as a pardoned sinner, as a justified soul, as an adopted child, and say, "Abba, Father!"

All is midnight gloom to his soul. And while God seems to have withdrawn, Satan instantly appears. Taking advantage of the momentary absence of the Lord, for, let it be remembered, it is not an actual and eternal withdrawal- Satan levels his fiery darts; suggests hard thoughts of God; tempts the soul to believe the past has been but a deception, and that the future will develop nothing but darkness and despair. Satan, that constant and subtle foe, frequently seizes, too, upon periods of the believer's history, when the Providences of God are dark and mysterious- when the path, along which the weary pilgrim is pressing, is rough and intricate- or, it may be, when he sees not a spot before him- the way is obstructed, and he is ready to exclaim with Job, "He has fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he has set darkness in my paths."

Job xix. 8; or with Jeremiah, "He has hedged me about, that I cannot get out." Lam. iii. 7. Let it not then be forgotten by the soul that walks in darkness and has no light, that the providential dealings of a covenant God and Father, which now are depressing the spirits, stirring up unbelief, and casting a shade over every prospect, may be seized upon by its great enemy, and appropriated to an occasion of deep and sore temptation. It was thus he dealt with our blessed Lord, who was in all points tempted as his people, yet without sin, Heb. iv. 15.

Satan, taking advantage of his prolonged fast, and the weakness of body and hunger which were the consequence- for, let it ever be borne in mind, God took upon him pure humanity with all the sympathies of our nature, and with all the weakness which clung to it presented the temptation in its most pliable form. Luke iv. 2- 13. And if the Head thus was tempted, so will be the member- if the Lord, so the disciple. And for this very end was our blessed Lord thus tempted, that he might enter sympathetically into all the circumstances of his tried and suffering people- "For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to support those who are tempted."

Heb. ii. 28. But we must not, we dare not, refrain from ascribing this spiritual darkness to another, and perhaps more obvious cause, we allude to a distant and careless walk. This will as certainly bring darkness into the soul, with its painful attendants- unbelief- loss of thoughts of God- slavish fear- as if an individual were to close every inlet of a habitation to the rays of the sun, and sit down amid the gloom and the obscurity with which he has enshrouded himself. There is no true spiritual light but that which beams from the Sun of Righteousness; and to this every inlet of the soul must be open.

All other light is false- it is but like the treacherous beacon erected upon a rock-bound coast, for the purpose of beguiling to its shore the unsuspecting bark. To enjoy this light then, a believer must dwell near the Sun, he must live close to Christ: he must live the life of daily faith upon him- he must look away from himself to Jesus- he must walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing- he must be found prayerful and diligent in the means; while, rising above them, he draws all his light, life, and peace from the God of the means.

O what losers are they who walk as Peter walked- at a distance from their Lord- what seasons of endearing communion- what tokens of love- what visits of mercy they rob themselves of! What losers are they who neglect the means of grace- closet prayer- church fellowship- the communion of saints- the

blessed ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper- these channels, through which a covenant God conveys such untold blessings into the soul of his dear child! For "the secret of the Lord is with those who fear him;" and to fear him, is not to dread him as a slave, but as a child to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly.

O! what losers then are such! While penning this closing part of the chapter, the writer was sent for to administer spiritual consolation to one on the confines of eternity, who, at an early period of her life, professed publicly her attachment to the Lord, but who, after a time, walked no more with Jesus; and now the season of sickness, and probably of death, had come! And O! could he have gathered every wandering, every backsliding, every careless, worldly professor of Christ around that bed, to have listened to the deep regrets, the bitter self-reproaches, the piercing cries for pardon, that fell from her lips, and to have witnessed, too, the deep anguish that wrung her agonized bosom, how more powerfully would they have warned, and how more persuasively would they have pleaded, than the page which now warns and pleads with the careless, prayerless, worldly professor!

Christian professor! are you walking at a distance from Christ, if following him at all? Are you opening your heart to the world- laying yourself out for its entanglements? Are you conforming to it in your spirit, your policy, your maxims, your dress, your pursuits, your friendship, your religion? Are you neglecting the means of grace, the sanctuary of God- the preaching of the Gospel, the prayer-meetings, the communion of saints? Are you neglecting prayer- family prayer- social prayer- sanctuary prayer- most of all, closet prayer?

O, if so, how fearfully you are turning your back upon God! how wantonly are you trampling your precious privileges under foot! What a harvest of sorrow are you sowing for a dying hour! what reason have you to tremble, lest after all, Christ has never been formed in your heart, the hope of glory! What is your present hope? Is it merely a profession? Give it up- abandon it as worthless, and as a sinner undone, a sinner without hope, go to Jesus. A mere profession will never save you.

A bare supposition will only delude you. You must have the witness of the Spirit. But to the soul following hard after God, we would say, there are two 'exceeding great and precious promises,' which a child of God should ever keep in view: "Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness." Ps. cxii. 4; "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Mal. iv. 2. Thus it is evident that to those who walk uprightly before God- upright in heart, as well as upright in outward conduct- upright in principle as well as upright in practice- and to those who walk in the holy filial fear of God, the Lord has his choicest covenant blessings.

But to return: We say not, then, that a momentary sense of God's withdrawment from the believer affects his actual security in the atoning blood: this, nothing can disturb. The safety of a child of God hinges not upon a frame or a feeling, the ever varying and fitful pulses of a believing soul. O no! The covenant rests upon a surer basis than this; the child of the covenant is sealed with a better hope and promise. He may change, but his covenant God never; his feelings may vary, but his Father's love never veers: He loved him from all eternity, and that love extends to all eternity.

As God never loved his child for anything he saw, or should see, in that child, so his love never changes for all the fickleness, sinfulness, and unworthiness, he daily and hourly discovers. O where would the soul fly but for this truth? When it takes into account the sins, the follies, the departures, the flaws of but one week; yes, when it reviews the history of but one day, and sees enough sin in a thought to sink it to eternal

and just perdition, but for an unchangeable God, to what consolation would it resort?

But what forms the great security of the believer? what, but the atoning blood? This, and this only. The Father, beholding his child in his beloved Son, washed and clothed, pardoned and justified, can "rest in his love, and rejoice over him with singing." The atonement guarantees his eternal safety. What formed the security of Noah and his family, when the deluge of God's wrath descended upon an ungodly world? The ark in which God had shut him. What formed the security of the children of Israel in Egypt, when the destroying angel passed through the camp waving in his hand the weapon of death?

The blood of the Pascal lamb, sprinkled on the lintel and doorposts of their dwellings; and where this sacred sign was seen, into that house he dared not enter, but passed on to do the work of death where no blood was found. Exactly what the ark was to Noah, and the blood of the lamb was to the children of Israel, is the atoning blood of Christ to the believing soul. It forms his eternal security. Reader! is that blood applied to you? Are you washed in it? Is it upon you at this moment?

Precious blood! precious Savior who shed it! precious faith that leads to it! how it washes away all sin! how it lightens the conscience of its burden, heals the heart of its wound- dispels the mist, and brings down the unclouded sunlight of God's reconciled countenance in the soul! O, adore the love and admire the grace that opened the fountain, and led you to bathe, all guilty, polluted, and helpless as you were, beneath its cleansing stream! and with Cowper let us sing, "E'er since by faith I saw the stream Your flowing wounds supply, Redeeming love has been my theme, And shall be until I die. "Then in a nobler, sweeter song, I'll sing your power to save; When this poor lispings, stammering tongue Lies silent in the grave."

Second- deeper views of sin's exceeding sinfulness, may be regarded as another invaluable blessing, resulting from a realizing apprehension of the atoning blood. No child of God, if he is advancing in the divine life, but must mourn over his defective views of sin. The holier he grows, the more sensible he is of this: yes, may we not add? the deeper the view of his own vileness, the stronger the evidence of his growth in sanctification. A growing hatred of sin, of little sins, of great sins, of all sin- sin detected in the indwelling principle, as well as sin observable in the outward practice, O, it is one of the surest symptoms of the onward progress of the soul in its spiritual course. The believer himself may not be sensible of it, but others see it; to him it may be like a retrograde, to an observer it is an evidence of advance. The child of God is not the best judge of his own spiritual growth. He may be rapidly advancing when not sensible of it; the tree may be growing downwards, its roots may be expanding and grasping more firmly the soil in which they are concealed, and yet the appearance of growth not be very apparent. There is an inward, concealed, yet effectual growth of grace in the soul; the believer may not be sensible of it, and even others may overlook it, but God sees it: it is his own work, and he does not think disdainfully of it.

God, in his gracious dealings with the believer, often works by contraries. He opens the eye of his child to the deep depravity of the heart; discloses to him the chamber of imagery; reveals to him the sin unthought of, unsuspected, unrepented, unconfessed, that lies deeply embedded there. And why? Only to make his child more holy; to compel him to repair to the mercy-seat, there to cry, there to plead, there to wrestle for its subjection, its mortification, its crucifixion. And through this, as it were, circuitous process, the believer presses on to high and higher degrees of holiness. In this way, too, the believer earnestly seeks for humility, by a deep discovery which the Lord gives him of the pride of his heart; for meekness by a discovery of petulance; for resignation to God's will, by a

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