burden too heavy to bear by a sensible sinner.@@1 When sin is charged home upon the conscience, and a saint groans, being burdened with it, what must that burden be, and how heavy the load which Christ bore, consisting of all the sins of all the elect front the beginning of the world to the end of it ; and yet he sunk not, but stood up under it ; failed not, non was he discouraged, being the mighty God, and the Man of God’s right hand, made strong for himself”

To the Arminiens or Remonstrants, this doctrine of the imputation of the sins of men to the Son of God appears as absurd as the similar doctrine of the imputation of the sin of Adam to his unborn posterity ; and it is certainly attend­ed with consequences which have alarmed serious Chris­tians of other denominations.

Were it possible in the nature of things, says the Armi- nian, to transfer the guilt of one person to another, and to lay it upon him as a burden, it could not be done without violating those laws of equity which are established in the Scripture and engraven on the human heart. But this is not possible. To talk of lifting masses of sin, or transfer­ring them like burdens from the guilty to the innocent, is to utter jargon, says he, which lias no meaning ; and we might with as much propriety speak of lifting a scarlet colour from a piece of cloth and laying it on the sound of a trumpet, as of literally lifting the sins of the elect from them and laying them on Christ. Guilt is seated on the mind ; and no man can become a sinner but by an act of volition. If Christ therefore *really* took upon him the sins of his people, he must have deliberately formed a wish to have actually *committed* all these sins ; but such a wish, though it would have made him inherently guilty, and therefore incapable of satisfying for sin, could not have can celled deeds that were done before he was born, or have made those innocent who really bad been sinners. A deed once done cannot be undone ; a volition which has been formed cannot be annihilated. By sincere repentance, the habitual dispositions are indeed changed, and those who have been sinners become objects of mercy ; but no power can recal the hours that are past, or make those actions which have been performed to have been not performed. To remove guilt from the sinner and lay it on the innocent may, therefore, be safely pronounced impossible even for Omnipotence itself, for it implies that a thing may be and not be at the same instant of time ; and the doctrine which teaches that this removal was made from the elect to Christ, is an imagination of yesterday, which has no countenance from Scripture, and is contrary to the established constitution of things. Those who imagine that guilt may be propagated from father to son, have something like an argument to urge for the imputation of Adam’s sin to his numberless posterity ; for all the men and women who have by ordinary genera­tion been introduced into the world, have undoubtedly de­rived their nature from the primeval pair. But Christ did not derive his nature from the *elect* that their sins should be communicated to him ; nor, as he was miraculously con­ceived by the Holy Ghost, can we attribute to him any de­gree of that *taint* which is supposed to have been conveyed from Adam to all the other generations of men.

Nothing more, therefore, can be meant by “ Christ’s be­ing made sin for us,” and “ bearing our sins in his own body on the tree,” or by God’s “ laying upon him the iniquity of us all,” than that by bis sufferings we are freed from the punishment of our sins ; it being in Scripture a common figure of speech, as even Dr. Gill has somewhere acknow­ledged, to denote by the word *sin* the *consequences* of sin. That this figure is used in those texts from which he infers that Christ took the sine of the elect on himself, is evident from the verse which he quotes from the gospel of St. Mat­

thew ; in which it is said, that “ himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.” The sicknesses and infirmities there alluded to are the leprosy, the palsy, the fever, and demoniacal possessions ; but when our blessed Lord cured these diseases, surely he did not by his omnipotent word lift them off from the patients and, take them on himself, so as actually to become a leper, a paralytic, and a dæmo- niac, or even to be reckoned as such either by the multi­tude, or by the priest, whose duty it was to take cognizance of every illegal uncleanness, (Levit, xiii). And if his in­veterate enemies did not *impure* to him the leprosy when he removed that plague from others, why should it be sup­posed that his own Father, to whom he was at all times well-pleasing, imputed to him the sins of which, by his sufferings, he removed the punishment from those who were guilty ? To impute to a person any action, whether virtuous or vici­ous, which he did not perform, can proceed only from igno­rance, or malice, or partiality ; but God is no respecter of persons, and from ignorance and malice he is removed to an infinite distance. It is indeed an undoubted truth, that “ the Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inhe­ritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father bath given him,” (Confession of Faith, chap. viii. § v.) ; but that he actually took on himself the sins of man­kind, or that those sin» were imputed to him by God, who punished him as a person whom he considered as guilty, is a doctrine equally injurious to the justice of the Father and to the immaculate purity of the Son.

To this imaginary transferring of virtues and vices from one person to another, as the Scriptures give no counte­nance, so they nowhere call the death of Christ a *satisfac­tion* for the sins of men. The term has indeed been long in use among divines, and when properly explained it may be retained without any danger ; but in treating of this sub­ject, it would perhaps be more prudent to restrict ourselves to the use of Scripture language, as the word *satisfaction* carries in it the ideas of a debt paid and accepted ; where­as it is said by St. Paul, that “ eternal life is the *gift of* God through Jesus Christ our Lord ; and that we are justified *freely by his grace* through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,” (Rom. vi. 23 ; iii. 24, 25).

To clear up this matter, and attain adequate notions of redemption, it will be necessary to look back to the fall of our first parents ; for the great purpose for which Christ was promised, and for which he came into the world, was, by bruising the head of the serpent, to restore mankind to the inheritance which they had lost through the transgres­sion of Adam. This is apparent not only from the original promise made to the woman, but also from different pas­sages in the epistles of St. Paul, who expressly calls Christ the second Adam, and says, that, “ as by the offence of one, judgment come upon all men to condemnation ; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life ;” that, “ as by one man’s disobe­dience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous ;” and that, “ as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,” (Rom. v. 18, 19; 1 Cor. xv. 22.) Hence it was that John the Bap­tist, when he saw Jesus coming to him, said to his disciples, “ Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away, not the *sins,* but the *sin of* the world,” (John i. 23), evidently al­luding to Adam’s sin and its consequences, since no other sin was ever committed of which the consequences extend to the whole world.

@@@1 By the phrase *a* ***sensible sinner,*** the learned author means a sinner who is conscious of guilt and ill desert as a transgressor of the divine law.