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## THE BLESSING OF SINS FORGIVEN.

No greater blessing can come to a man this side of heaven than the blessing of having his sins forgiven. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psalm xxxii. 1).

Now, there are two ways of covering sin, and only two ways—God's way and man's way. For 6,000 years man has been trying to cover his sin, and he has made poor work of it. Adam tried it in Eden, and Cain tried it outside of Eden, and they have been trying it right along down all these years. You will find that all classes, high and low, kings on the throne, priests behind the altar, prophets, peasants, rich and poor, have tried to hide their sins, and they have made poor work of it. No man has ever yet succeeded in covering his sin.

Not only that, but Scripture says: "He that covereth his sin shall not prosper." I have no doubt that the reason so many men have a stormy voyage in life is because there is some accursed sin in their lives. I am not talking for outsiders any more than I am for church members. I believe that if the latter have sins that they are not willing to confess they will not prosper. Some secret sin is hindering their growth. Where do the defaulting presidents of banks, and other offenders, come from? Many of them out of the churches. They have sat under the ministry and have heard men, over and over again, preaching against sin, but it has not struck home. These forget they have sins to con-

fess as well as the ungodly and the people outside of the church.

God wants honesty and uprightness. A man that you can trust will get along anywhere, but a man that has to be watched will never prosper. There can never be a healthy soul as long as there is sin in it. Sin is a foreign substance, it does not belong in the soul, just as a bullet is a foreign element, and the body will not be healthy with a bullet in it. God does not want the wicked to flourish, for He says: "The way of the transgressor is hard." God wants it to be hard, for if a man prospered in his wickedness he would never come to God.

When a man is ready and willing to confess his sins and turn from them, God covers them. When God covers sin it can never be found in time or eternity. It is a great privilege for a man to be forgiven, and not have a cloud between him and heaven, between him and the smiling face of his Father. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Christ that died?" The Bible says in one place that the sins shall not be mentioned; in another place, that they shall not be remembered.

There are four expressions in the Bible about how God covers sin: First—He casts them into the depths of the sea. Second—He casts our sins behind His back. Third—He blots them out as a thick cloud. Fourth—He removes them as far as the east is from the west.

#### INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA.

He will cast them into the depths of the sea.

Dr. Gordon, of Boston, was preaching on that

text, and he forgot to put in "the depths." He just said that God would cast them into the sea. When he got home, his little boy, four years old, spoke up and said:

"Father, why didn't you tell the people that sins were heavy like lead, and sank out of sight in the water? They might think they were like corks, floating around on top where they could be seen."

God has covered that point. He has cast them into *the depths* of the sea. Let the devil go down there and get them if he can. It is a safe place to have them, in the depths of the sea. There are some parts of the sea which they never have been able to fathom. Bunyan says: "Thank God, it is a sea, not a river. If it was a river, it might dry up, and they might find them in the bed of the river, but the sea never dries up."

#### BEHIND GOD'S BACK.

Secondly, out of love to my soul, He has taken all my sins and cast them behind His back.

Not behind *my* back. The smallest devil in hell could find them before I got to bed to-night, and haunt me, if they were behind my back, but they can't get behind the Almighty, behind God's back.

#### BLOTTED OUT AS A CLOUD.

The third expression is, "I will blot them out like a thick cloud."

You see a cloud to-night, and you get up early in the morning, and it is gone. Can you find the cloud? Never. There may be other clouds, but that cloud will never appear in the history of the

universe. God says He will blot sin out like a thick cloud.

#### REMOVED AS FAR AS EAST AND WEST.

And the fourth expression, I like that best.

I wish some one would figure it up for me, and tell me how far the east is from the west. I don't know much about astronomy, but astronomers tell us that light travels at the rate of 188,000 miles a second,—I can't take that in,—and that the light of some planets has been traveling for nearly 6,000 years, and hasn't got here yet; and some one has just discovered that that is just the fringe on the garments of our God. How much farther the east is from the west than the planets are from the world I can't tell. Think of it! God takes our sins and puts them away as far as from the east to the west.

Don't cover your sins; don't hide them. You cannot dig a grave so deep but that they will have a resurrection some time. God will touch some secret spring of your conscience, and say: "Son, remember," and tramp, tramp, tramp, they will all come back, every one of them!

I have been twice in the jaws of death. Once I had gone down in the river the second time, and was going down the third time when I was rescued, and quicker than a flash everything I had said and done came before me! How a whole life can be crowded into a second of time, I do not know. Again, in Chicago, just in the jaws of death I was saved, and again my whole life came before me like a flash, from my earliest childhood up. Everything I had said, everything I had heard, and everything I had done, all came back.

Some years ago I met a man, aged 32 years, in Chicago, who, twelve years previously had fled from Canada because of a crime he had committed. For twelve years he had been trying to cover up his sin, but it pursued him night and day. Finally he asked me to advise him. I told him to make restitution of the money he had stolen, and to make an honest confession.

You should have seen the tears of joy run down that man's face when he found that he could be forgiven and have his sin put away. What a terrible time he had been having those twelve years! He had been trying to cover his sin in man's way.

If you want your sins blotted out completely, you must make a clean breast of them all. "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin."

I read of an ex-prisoner who had secured a position as night watchman in a store.

One of his prison associates came to him, and attempted to persuade the man to leave the doors open, so that he could rob the store. The watchman refused, and his former companion threatened to tell his employers about his past life. The watchman laughed in his tempter's face and replied :

"Go and tell them. I have nothing to fear, for they knew all of my past life before they hired me."

O, man, woman, confess your sins to God! Then you shall know what it is to have heaven in your soul. Blessed—happy—is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER OF MARK,

In the 5th chapter of Mark—I call that the high-water mark of that Gospel—there are three persons that were very far gone in the sight of man. One was possessed of devils, another was possessed of an incurable disease, and the other was dead. You couldn't get three harder cases than that anywhere, could you? If we had them with us now, we would put the first in a madhouse, the second in a hospital for incurables, and the third one in the grave; but Christ was a match for the whole three. Don't think any man or woman is a hard case, and God can't save him. Don't let Satan make you believe that there is any one beyond the reach of God, that cannot be saved. It is a lie from hell. He can save unto the uttermost.

### DEVILS.

Take that demoniac possessed with devils. They didn't have insane hospitals then, but they had tried to take him, they had tried to chain him. Like Samson, he would break the fetters; they couldn't keep him. He tore his clothes off himself, and had his dwelling-place among the tombs. That is where every sinner lives—among the dead. He was a terror to all the women in that country. Their hearts jumped up into their mouths every time they passed by the graveyard. This man came howling out of the tombs; why, it would make their blood run cold. Little children were afraid if they heard his

cry in the distance. But Christ came that way, and to show how the man was under the very power of the devil, he said:

“Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?”

That shows a man is under the power of the devil, when he thinks that Christ has come to torment him. Sinners have a false idea of Christ; they think He is their enemy. But He is their best friend. The Son of God left the bosom of the Father not to torment men, but to save them. He came to snap the fetters and set every captive man free. He went out of His way, probably, over into that coast just to save that man.

I get a good deal of comfort out of the fact that when He told those devils to come out, they had to move out. He has power over devils. When He said: “All power on earth is given unto Me,” I believe He meant what He said. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He will do it if we will let Him.

Did you ever notice that the devils prayed, and He answered their prayer? They wanted to go into the herd of swine, and He let them go. And the citizens of that country prayed that He would depart out of their coasts, and He answered their prayer. But this man, when he was clothed and in his right mind, prayed that he might go with Christ; he wanted to be near Him—it shows he had really become a Christian. “No,” Christ says, “you go home and tell your friends what great things the Lord has done for you.” He did not answer his prayer.



Christmas Evans, that Welsh preacher, pictures the man coming home. The little children out playing—his own children—catch sight of him, and they run into the house and cry:

“O, mother, mother, father is coming! He will kill every one of us.”

The mother slips to the door and shuts it, and puts a bar and a chain across it, and says:

“Mary, come away from the window! Don’t let him see you.”

And Mary says: “Mother, I don’t believe it is father after all. He is clothed like other people, and he is walking in the footpath.”

Before, when he came home, he would come in a bee line over ditches and hedges, rush into the house, and knock his wife down, and kick the children. They couldn’t believe it was he, such a wonderful change had come over him. The devils had gone out, and Christ had come in.

When he gets to the house he finds the door bolted and barred and chained and fastened, and he knocks gently.

“Mary, Mary, let me in! I haven’t come to hurt you. I have come to tell you what great things Jesus of Nazareth has done for me. I have come to tell you how He cast the devils out of me.”

With fear and trembling the wife opens the door, and she can hardly believe her eyes. His voice is as sweet as it was the day he married her; how it just thrills her soul! That face is lit up with the light of another world. She leaps into his arms, they embrace each other, and then he sits down and begins to tell what the Lord has done for him. be-

cause the Lord told him to go home and tell his friends. And I see the little children creep up around him, a little timid, a little afraid lest they may get a rap over the head, as they often did; but by and by they gather around him, and he has them up on his knees, and they look up into his face. They have their father back again!

Do you know, we have men that are possessed with devils as much as they were in the days of Christ on earth? They are legion; the intellectual devil, the whiskey devil, and the devils of lust and passion. These infernal devils, He can cast them out. Let us pray Him to do it. Let us believe He can and will do it.

#### DISEASE.

But go a little farther, and here is this woman who has been twelve years suffering untold misery. If they had had patent medicines in those days, she would have tried all the different kinds on the market. She had probably been up to Damascus and been treated by the leading physicians there, gone up to Jerusalem, and been treated by the physicians there, and she "suffered many things of many physicians." They had got all her money, and hadn't done her any good. That was a hopeless case, wasn't it? An issue of blood for twelve years. But some one told her of Jesus of Nazareth, how He had power to raise the dead, how He had power to cleanse the leper, and how He had power to make the blind see and the deaf to hear, and perhaps He

could heal her. Faith rose up in her soul, but she asked: "What will He charge me?" Her friend said He wouldn't charge anything; all she had to do was to go and speak to Him.

I can see her getting down an old faded sunbonnet—she hadn't had a new bonnet for a long time—the doctors got all her money. Her children say:

"Now, mother, I hope you are not going to run after any doctor. You have been twelve years running after them, and you have grown worse all the while."

"I am going to Jesus," she says. "I understand He is about a mile or two away, and I am going to see if He can heal me."

"Don't be carried away with that deceiver. He can't help you."

But she had faith, and I see her elbowing her way through the crowd, pushing up towards Him. A great able-bodied man pushes her back, and says:

"Don't you know other people want to get near Him as well as yourself?"

She pays no attention to anything that he says, but she just thinks to herself—

"If I can just touch the fringe of His garment, I will be made whole."

There wasn't a thing that the Son of God found on this earth that pleased Him as faith did. As some one has said, "faith could lead Him anywhere, could get anything out of Him." He always cashes that at sight, not forty days after sight. This woman had faith, and when she got near enough, she reached out her bony arm from under her thread-bare shawl, and touched the fringe of His garment.

and in a moment she was made whole, healed of all her disease!

And Jesus turned around and said, "Who touched me?"

I can imagine one says, "Lord, that is a strange question. Look at the crowds that have been thronging you."

Do you know there were people in those days, just as there are now, who couldn't tell the difference between the touch of the crowd and the touch of faith? Do you know there are some in this audience who don't know anything about what is going on here, while others are reaching out the hand of faith and appropriating the blessings of God, and their souls are being healed? And this woman, she fell on her face and confessed all. Jesus knew who had touched Him; He knew the hand of faith that had been upon Him, but He wanted her testimony there. Man, reach out the hand of faith and touch that Son of God now, and your soul shall be healed. He is able. No incurable cases, if you please! No one beyond His reach and beyond His power!

#### DEATH.

But now Jesus passes on to the house of Jairus. When they drew near the house, some servants came out and said:

"Don't trouble the Master. It is all over. The maid is dead."

It looked as if the Son of God was too late, didn't it? My dear friend, He has never been too late yet; He is always on time. He got there just at the appointed time. I haven't any doubt but away

back in the secret councils of eternity it was planned He should get to Jairus' house just at that hour.

When He told them she wasn't dead, they laughed Him to scorn. Man, death can't exist where Christ is; do you know that? I remember a good many years ago, when a young man, I was called suddenly to officiate at a funeral in Chicago. There were going to be quite a few business men at the funeral, and they were not Christians, and I said to myself, Now will be my opportunity to get hold of those men. I took my Bible, and read through the four Gospels hunting for one of Christ's funeral sermons. It never dawned on me until that day that He never preached a funeral sermon while here on earth. He broke up every funeral He ever attended. The dead men would leap right up out of their graves at His word. He will smash up the undertaking business when He comes back. Death can't exist where He is. I used to think death dragged Him into the grave, but He went into the grave after death and robbed the grave of its victim. That is what He went into the grave for—to overthrow death. Death hadn't any power over Him. "If any man keep My sayings, he shall never see death." Never!

He went into that room where death was, and it fled before Him. He spoke to that child and said, "Maid, arise," and she arose.

Man, are you dead? He can quicken you. He will impart life to you to-night if you will let Him. Bring your death to Him, and get life. Bring your darkness to Him, and get light. Bring your trouble to Him, and get peace. Bring your sorrow to Him,

and get joy. There isn't a thing that your soul needs but that it is all in Christ. Bring on your men possessed of devils, bring on your incurables, bring on your dead. The Son of Man is able to cast out devils, and heal the sick, and raise the dead. Oh, what a Savior we have, and what power He has!