

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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GOD'S NON-REMEMBRANCE OF SIN.

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## A Sermon

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"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."—Isaiah xliii. 25.

"For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."—Jeremiah xxxi. 34.

"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."—Hebrews viii. 12.

"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."—Hebrews x. 17.

You see these texts are all alike in their declaration that the Lord will not remember his people's sins. I have taken four of them to make the basis of my sermon firm as adamant. It is written, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." Here then, you have Isaiah and Jeremiah, two Old Testament saints affirming the same thing: is not this enough? Added to these you have the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who, in all probability, was Paul, and these three agree in one. Their united testimony is that Jehovah, the Lord God, will forgive the sins of his people, and do it in so complete a way that he will remember their iniquities no more. Now, if I did not preach at all, but merely gave you these four texts to consider, I think the service ought to be full of comfort to all who know their guiltiness and are anxious to obtain mercy. That article in the creed is too little thought of,—"*I believe in the forgiveness of sin.*" Men flippantly declare that they believe it when they are not conscious of any great sin of their own; but when his transgression is made apparent to a man, and his iniquity comes home to him, it is quite another matter. Does any unregenerate person believe in the forgiveness of sin? I trow not. No man in sincerity believes it until God the Holy Ghost has taught him its truth, and has written it upon his heart. No revealed truth is more generally doubted and disbelieved than this, the plainest of all revelations, that the Lord is gracious and full of compassion, and ready to pass by the iniquities of his people. Men disbelieve for themselves, and doubt it as to others when the matter is fairly tested.

When a man's sins are set before him in the light of God's countenance his first instinct is to fear that they are altogether unpardonable. If he does not state his unbelief in so many words, yet in the secret of his soul that dreadful conviction takes hold upon him and darkens every window

of hope. He looks to the law of God, and while he looks in that direction he will certainly conclude that there is no pardon, for the law knows nothing of forgiveness. It is, "This do, and thou shalt live; disobey and thou shalt die." To convince and to condemn is all the law was sent for. By the law is the knowledge of sin, and by its power sinners are shut up in the prison-house of despair, from which only the Lord Jesus can deliver us. What the law asserts the understanding also supports; for within the awakened man there is the memory of his past offences, and on account of these his conscience passes judgment upon his soul, and condemns it even as the law doth. "God must punish wickedness," is the utterance of conscience; "he were not the judge of all the earth if he did not do right; and if he does right he must visit my transgressions with the threatened penalty." Thus, the thunder of Sinai is echoed by conscience. Meanwhile, many natural impressions and instincts assist and increase the clamours of conscience; for the man knows within himself, as the result of observation and experience, that sin must bring its own punishment; he perceives that is a knife which cuts the hand of him that handles it, a sword that kills the man who fights therewith. He feels that he cannot himself readily pass by offences committed by his fellowmen, and so he concludes that the Lord cannot willingly forgive. That part of the hardness of his heart goes to deepen the conviction that God will not pass by his transgression; and he is therefore terribly dismayed and hopeless of mercy. Meanwhile the devil comes in with all the horrors of the infernal pit, and threatens speedy destruction. That same evil spirit who once pictured sin in glowing colours, and set before the sinner the pleasureableness of unrighteousness, now comes in and turns accuser, forestalls the final sentence, and hardens the man's heart by the assurance that there is no hope. Bunyan very aptly pictures Diabolus when he was attacking the town of Mansoul, as making Captain Past-hope unfurl the red colours which were carried by Mr. Despair, and he also speaks of the roaring of the tyrant's drum, which sounded forth terribly, especially by night, so that the men of Mansoul had always in their ears the sound of Hell-fire! Hell-fire! and all this to keep them from submitting to their gracious prince. Thus, for once, the devil craftily co-operates with the law of God and with conscience; these would drive men to self-despair, but Satan would go further, and compel them to despair as touching the Lord himself, so as to believe that pardon for transgression is quite impossible. The convinced sinner is able to believe that mercy may be shown to others; but as for himself, he signs his own death-warrant, and labours under the full persuasion that the acts of God's mercy can never extend to him. No stocks can hold a man so fast as his own guilty fears. The hangman's whip never tortured men so cruelly as doth an awakened conscience.

With the desponding I shall try to deal at this time, and may the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, help me to console them.

I. Our first theme is this,—THERE IS FORGIVENESS. Our four texts all teach us that doctrine with great distinctness. Is not that a sublime assurance, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins?" Does not Paul put it sweetly as from God's own mouth: "Their sins and iniquities

will I remember no more." Remember how the Psalmist in the one hundred and thirtieth psalm makes this a special note of thanksgiving: "There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared." Let us adore the Lord because he delighteth in mercy.

For a minute or two let me try to prove,—may it be to your satisfaction, O ye despairing ones,—that there is forgiveness.

This appears, first, in *the treatment of sinners by God*, inasmuch as he spares their forfeited lives. When our first parents had transgressed they came at once under desert of penalty. The Lord visited the garden and convinced the offenders of their transgression; but instead of there and then pronouncing their doom, and casting them for ever away from his presence, he talked to them of a certain seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head. The curse which must fall fell obliquely, descending first upon the soil, and secondarily upon the man; first upon the serpent, and more gently on the woman, whose very pain and travail were to bring forth deliverance for the race, and vengeance on the enemy. The man and the woman each had a separate sentence in labour and in childbirth; but, oh, how mild were these sentences compared with what they might have been. How joyful is the fact that over all there was the sparing hand of God letting them live, and his cheering voice promising them ultimate deliverance. Would the Lord thus have spared them if he had not meant to show mercy? Would he not have crushed a sinful race even in its egg, and have blotted out for ever those of whom not long after it repented him that he had made them upon the earth? Assuredly the Lord meant pardon when he tarried to enquire, "Adam, where art thou?" In the morning of human history the Lord's long-suffering displayed itself and gave promise of larger grace. The like is true of you and of me. If God had no pardons would he not long ago have cut us down as cumberers of the ground? We sinned early in life; perhaps we sinned grossly in our youthful days, doing evil with great wantonness and wilfulness, according to the obstinacy of our hearts. Why did he not then say, "I will take these away: they will only go from bad to worse, and they will infect others with their vices: therefore will I root them out lest they become injurious to those about them and a curse to future generations?" But no; even yonder blasphemer was not smitten to death when he imprecated damnation upon himself; you Sabbath-breaker was not cut down when he made the Lord's holy day to be an opportunity for wickedness; he that lied was not made a dreadful example of judgment like Ananias and Sapphira; he that stood out to oppose God was not swallowed up quick, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. No, all these have been spared, spared to this day: and to what end, think you? Surely, the long-suffering of God is repentance, and repentance is mercy. God waiteth long because he willeth not the death of any but that they turn to him and live.

In the second place why did God institute *the ceremonial law* if there were no ways of pardoning transgression? Why the bullocks and the lambs offered in sacrifice? Why the shedding of blood if God did not intend to blot out sin? Why the burnt offerings in which God accepted man's gift, if man could not be accepted? Assuredly he could not be accepted if regarded as guilty. Why the peace offering in which God

feasted with the offerer, and the two united in feeding upon the one sacrifice? How could this be unless God intended to forgive and enter into fellowship with men? I confess I cannot understand the institution of priesthood and sacrifice unless mercy was intended thereby. Again, why was there a tabernacle for God to dwell with his people if he would not forgive their iniquities? How could he dwell with unforgiven men? Why was there a mercy-seat? Why was there a high priest ordained from among men who should enter into the holy-place, and make a typical atonement? Does not a type imply the existence of that which is typified? Why the scapegoat to take away sin in symbol, if sin, cannot be taken away in reality? Why the burning of the offering without the gate in order that sin might be put away from God's people, if it could not be put away? Certainly, the evident design of the whole Mosaic economy was to reveal to man the existence of mercy in the heart of God, and the effectual operation of that mercy in washing away sin.

Further than this, dear friends, if there were no forgiveness of sin why has the Lord given to sinful men *exhortations to repent*? Why doth the Lord say, "Turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment and wait upon thy God continually?" Why doth he say to men, "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips." Why doth he cry, "Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God"? Is it not because it can be added, "for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil"? Is it not true, even as Elihu said, "He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light"? If sin could not be pardoned why under the gospel are we bidden to urge men to repent of sin, to confess their sins, and to forsake them? Might not the Lord have said, "Let them alone: it is of no use their repenting: no mercy is in reserve for them, therefore let them continue in their iniquity till their own ways destroy them"? Even the John Baptist cry of "Repent! Repent!" is a note of hope to transgressors. The times of their ignorance God hath winked at, but now under gospel rule he commands all men everywhere to repent, because repentance hath the promise of the blotting out of sin.

If you will think of it you will see that there must be pardons in the hand of God, or why *the institution of religious worship* among us to this day? Why are we allowed to pray in secret if we cannot be forgiven? What is the value of prayer at all if that first and most vital favour of forgiven sin is utterly beyond our reach? Why are we allowed to sing the praises of God? Why has the Holy Ghost given us the Book of Psalms? Why are we bidden to use psalms and hymns and spiritual songs? God cannot accept the praises of unforgiven men: worshippers must be clean ere they can draw near to his altar with their incense; if, then, I am taught to sing and give thanks to God it must



be because "his mercy endureth for ever." Does God expect the condemned to praise him? Will he shut us up in the prison-house for certain death and yet expect us to chant hallelujahs to his praise? It cannot be so. The very ordaining of prayer and praise indicates a design of mercy to the sons of men.

Why, dear friends, are there two special ordinances of God's house if in that house there is no remission of sin? Why the baptism of believers? It signifies our death in Christ to sin. But how so if we cannot be dead to sin? It signifieth typically the washing away of sin. But to what end, and to what use, except of delusion, if there be no washing away of sin by God's abounding grace? What means the Lord's Supper, that eating of bread with God and drinking of the cup in familiar fellowship with him? Why that showing forth the death of Christ until he come if in that death there is no virtue, and if God cannot deal with men on terms of love? Surely the ordinances of the Lord's house are full of invitation to such as bemoan their transgressions and are willing to come to Jesus for pardon and renewal. The very existence of a church, and of a gospel ministry, and the toleration of divine worship are promises and prophecies of the forgiveness of sins.

What assurance of pardon lies in the ordaining, sealing, and ratifying of *the covenant of grace*. The first covenant left us under condemnation, but one main design of the new covenant is to bring us into justification. Why a new covenant at all if our unrighteousness can never be removed? Is not this the tenor of the covenant as stated in our second text? Let the Holy Ghost himself be a witness unto us as we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." What sayest thou to this, O despairing one? Wilt thou dream that God can lie and even make a covenant merely to mock poor sinners with a groundless hope? Oh, think not so, for there is forgiveness.

Furthermore, my brethren, why did Christ institute *the Christian ministry*, and send forth his servants *to proclaim his gospel*? For what is the gospel but a declaration that Christ is exalted on high to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins? Is not its great promise this—that God will put away our transgressions upon our believing in Jesus Christ, our Great Sacrifice? "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," for if it were not so then has the cross become a nullity, and the death of the Only-begotten a hideous mistake. To what end those bleeding wounds? To what end that thorn-crowned head? To what end that cry, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani*"? To what end that shout of "It is finished"? The cross is the grandest of realities, and the core of its meaning is the removal of sin by him who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree. Assuredly there is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness: heavy-laden soul, that fountain is opened for thee. Now, once in the end of the world hath the Son of God appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself: poor guilty one, if thou believest, thy guilt was put away by his atoning death.

Why are we so earnestly commanded to preach this gospel to every creature if the creature hearing it and believing it must, nevertheless,

still lie under his sin? Our Lord Jesus hath commanded that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem; why is this, if there be no remission? The genuine love of God is manifested in his desire that to the utmost ends of the earth it should be proclaimed that "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men."

"Waft, waft ye winds, the story,  
And you, ye waters, roll,  
Till like a sea of glory  
It spreads from pole to pole."

There is forgiveness. Through the name of Jesus whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." "He that believeth in him is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses." Paul saith, "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you," and it is even so.

Now, you do not want any more arguments, but if you did I would venture to offer this. Why are we *taught in that blessed model of prayer* which our Saviour has left us, to say, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," or, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us"? It is evident that God means us to give a real, true, and hearty absolution to all who have offended us. He does not intend that we should play at forgiveness, but should really and from our hearts most freely and sincerely forgive all those who have done evil towards us in any way. Yes, but then he has linked with that forgiveness our prayer for mercy, teaching us to ask that he would forgive us as we forgive them. If, then, our forgiveness is real, so is his; if ours be sincere, so is his; if ours be complete, so is his; only much more so, inasmuch as the great God of all is so much more gracious than we poor, fallen creatures ever can be. A star of hope shines upon the sinner in the Lord's Prayer in that particular petition; for it seems to say, "There is a real, true, and hearty forgiveness of God toward you, even as there is in your heart a real, true, and hearty forgiveness of those who offend against you." Mind you do really and heartily forgive others, for your own pardon is to be measured thereby. See well to this.

The best of all arguments is this: *God has actually forgiven multitudes of sinners.* We have read in Holy Scripture of men who walked with God and had this testimony, that they pleased God; but they could not have pleased God if their sins still provoked him to wrath; therefore he must have put their sins away. Those saints of the Old Testament who were evidently divinely favoured, with whom God held sweet communion, to whom he gave marvellous power in prayer, in whom he showed the majesty of faith,—all those must have been forgiven men; for the Lord could not have walked with them, and dwelt in them, and worked by them, and displayed his glory in them, if he had not forgiven them. But I need not talk of past ages; there be many sitting among you this day who if you will ask them will tell you that they enjoy a clear sense of forgiven sin. They remember well that happy day when Jesus washed their sins away; and their state of peace, of joyful

privilege, and of expectant hope, is to them intensely delightful, and may be to you an evident testimony that remission of sin is a real experience, and is known among God's people at this day. Sin can still be put away, the spot which seemed indelible can be washed out, till all is white as snow, through the precious blood of Christ. Our texts, all of them declare it, saying with one breath, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

May God the Holy Spirit make use of these arguments for the comfort of every seeking sinner here and of many more who shall read this discourse.

II. Secondly, THIS FORGIVENESS IS TANTAMOUNT TO FORGETTING SIN. This is a wonder to me, a wonder of wonders, that God should say that he will do what in some sense he cannot do;—that he should use speech which includes an impossibility, and yet that it should be strictly true as he intends it. God's pardon of sin is so complete that he himself describes it as not remembering our iniquity and transgression. I have said that there is an impossibility in it, and so there is, because the Lord cannot in strict accuracy of speech forget anything: forgetfulness is an infirmity, and God has no infirmities. The Lord does not exercise memory as you and I do. We recall the past, but he has no past: all things are present with him. God sees everything at once by an intuitive perception: the past, the present, the future are before him at a glance. We may not speak, except after the manner of men, of the Lord God as having memory; and yet how blessed it is that he should himself use the speech which is current among ourselves, and represent himself after the manner of a man, and then say, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more for ever." He wishes us to know that his pardon is so true and deep that it amounts to an absolute oblivion, a total forgetting of all the wrong-doing of the pardoned ones.

You know what we do when we exercise memory. To speak popularly, a man lays up a thing in his mind: but when sin is forgiven *it is not laid up in God's mind*. A certain matter has happened, and we remember it: storing it away in our memory. We read that "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." We make a kind of storeroom of our memory, and there things are preserved, like fruits in autumn, stored up to be used by and by. We reckon a man to be fortunate who has a good memory, so that he can lay by things in his brain where he can get at them in time of need. The Lord will not do this with our sins. He will not store them in his archives: he will not give them house-room. The record of our sin shall not be laid up in the divine treasury: we shall not cry with Job, "My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity." As for the ungodly, their sins are written with an iron pen, and the measure of their iniquity is daily filling, till it be poured out upon their own head: their sins have gone before them to the judgment seat, and are crying aloud for vengeance. As for God's people, their case is otherwise, the Lord imputeth not their iniquities to them, and does not treasure them up against a day of wrath. Of course the Lord remembers their evil doings, in the sense that he cannot forget anything; but judicially as a judge, he forgets the transgressions of the pardoned ones. They are not before him in court, and come not under his official ken.

In remembering, men also consider and meditate on things; but *the Lord will not think over* the sins of his people. A grievous wrong is apt to engross our thoughts. It often casts its shadow upon the mind, and you cannot get rid of it. I have known persons brood over an offence as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings. The wrong grows worse as they think it over. They carefully observe the offence from different points of view, and whereas they were indignant at first, they nurse their wrath and make it so warm, that it turns to fury. At first, they would have been satisfied with an apology; but when they have brooded over the injustice, it seems so atrocious that they demand vengeance on the offender. The merciful Lord doth not so to those who repent. No; for he saith, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." The great Father's heart is not brooding over the injuries we have done: his infinite mind is not revolving within itself the tale of our iniquities. Ah, no. If we have fled to Christ for refuge, the Lord remembers our sin no more. The record of our iniquity is taken away, and the judge has no judicial memory of it.

Sometimes you have almost forgotten a thing, and it is quite gone out of your mind; but an event happens which recalls it so vividly that it seems as if it were perpetrated but yesterday. *God will not recall the sin of the pardoned.* I am blest, thank God, with a splendid memory for forgetting what anybody says or does against me. I forget it, not because I try to do so, but because I cannot help it; and therefore I claim no credit for it. The other day when I was speaking kindly with a person I was reminded by another that this man had done me a great injustice years ago. I had no recollection of it, and when it was brought before my mind I was grateful that I had forgotten it, because I could honestly treat the man as a friend, as indeed he now is. The occurrence was banished from my mind till my memory was refreshed about it. The gracious Lord can never be refreshed in his memory concerning the sins of his people: they are gone past recall. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Neither will there be a dark day when all on a sudden the Lord will say, "I have been treating this man graciously, but now I recollect what he did in former years, and I must change my tone. I recollect that oath he swore, that criminal indulgence into which he fell, that drunkenness, that piece of dishonesty, that awful hypocrisy; and though I have been gentle with him, I must in justice change my course, and punish him." No! no! this will never be the case with our forgiving Lord. "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." "No more!" Let those words go echoing through the chambers of despair: "No more!" Is there not music in the two syllables? God will never have his memory refreshed. The transgressions of his people are dead and buried with Christ, and they shall never have a resurrection: "I will not remember their sins."

Furthermore, this not remembering, means that God will *never seek any further atonement.* The apostle saith: "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." The one sacrifice of Jesus has made an end of sin. Under the old law they offered an expiatory sacrifice, but they must needs offer it again and again. There was remembrance of sins made every year on the day of atonement; but



now the blessed One hath entered once for all within the veil, and hath put away sin for ever by the sacrifice of himself, so that there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. The Lord will never demand another victim, nor seek another expiatory offering. The sufferings of Jesus are so all-sufficient that no believer shall be made to suffer penalty for his unrighteousness. Look at that fiction of purgatory which is coming back into the English Church, and is hankered after by certain Dissenters. They are beginning to believe in a modified form of purgatory, and this is a dark sign of the times. Purgatory has always paid the Pope well; it is the fattest province of his dominions, and has furnished his larder plentifully. But how can God's people go to purgatory? for if they go there at all, they go there for sins which God does not remember, and so he cannot give a reason for sending them there. I have no authentic communication by which to describe purgatory, but by Romish report it is a terrible place; now, if true believers go there, then God either does remember their sins, which he says he will not do; or else he punishes them for sins which he does not recollect. Did you ever hear of a judge sending a man to prison for a crime which the judge did not remember? Does God forgive and forget and yet punish? Do not, I pray you, believe in any shape or form in a middle state in which sin can be atoned for or the condition of a man altered. When you die you shall either go to heaven or to hell, and that straight away, and your state in either case will be fixed, and fixed eternally without the possibility of a change. This doctrine is the cornerstone of Protestantism, and if that be taken away there is a vacuum left in which all the evil doctrines of the papacy will speedily find a nest. Stand you to the truth revealed in Scripture, and to that only. The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal. If you are forgiven God will never remember your sins; so that in any shape or way you shall never have to make an atonement for them.

Again, when it is said that God forgets our sins it signifies that *he will never punish us for them*. How can he when he has forgotten them? Next, that *he will never upbraid us with them*,—"He giveth liberally and upbraideth not." How can he upbraid us with what he has forgotten? He will not even lay them to our charge. See what Ezekiel says—"All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him." The apostle bravely demanded, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Shall God do it? "It is God that justifieth," how then, can he accuse? Shall Christ do it? He is the Judge; but he cannot accuse, for "it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who sitteth at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Shall Jesus intercede for us and yet accuse us? Shall there come sweet waters and bitter waters out of the same fountain? No, that cannot be. The Lord has forgotten our sins, and therefore he can never lay them to our charge.

Once more, when the Lord says, "I will not remember their sins," what does it mean but this—that *he will not treat us any the less generously* on account of our having been great sinners. You that have been the chief of sinners, he will not put you in the second class of Christians, and treat you with a sort of second-rate love. He will not even remember that you have sinned, but treat you as if you had been

perfectly innocent, and were totally clear from all iniquity. He will not remember your faults. Why, look how the Lord takes some of the biggest sinners and uses them for his glory. Is not this a proof that he has ceased to remember their sins? When I think of Peter standing up on the Day of Pentecost, and three thousand being converted under his first sermon, I think no more of Peter's failure and the cock crowing. I can see that the Lord has forgotten his threefold denial, and placed him in the front to be a soul-winner. But the Lord Jesus not only uses his people, he honours them greatly. What honours he put upon the apostles, those men that forsook him and fled in the hour of his passion! He says to each of them, "I will not remember thy sins," for he makes them leaders of his hosts, though they have been a parcel of runaways, and have forsaken their Master in his hour of peril.

See how condescendingly the Lord has taken some here present, and has honoured them, and given them to bring blood-bought souls to himself, in proof that he has wholly forgotten their sin. Then to think that he should adopt us into his family, we that were his enemies, and rebellious, and children of the devil. Is it not wonderful that he puts us among the children, and even makes us "heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ." Surely, when that testament was written by which he made us heirs with Christ, it was clear proof that the Father did not any more remember our iniquities. To put down such blacks in the same testament with his own dear Son, and then to say, "I will receive them graciously and love them freely," this is surprising grace. Brethren, infinite love has made us to be "accepted in the Beloved," comely with his comeliness which he has put upon us; precious in his sight and honourable, jewels in his casket, and a crown of glory unto him, is not this the sign of perfect forgiveness? With his whole heart he watches over us to do us good. Surely, blessing he blesses us; yea, and makes us blessings. We shall have grace on earth, and glory in heaven. He will seat us as objects of his grace in heaven; not in an inferior place in the suburbs or behind the door, but he will cause us to sit with Jesus on his throne, even as he has sat down with the Father on his throne. We shall be with him where he is and behold his glory, and be for ever peers of the heavenly realm. Surely all this proves that he has altogether blotted out our sins, and has determined to treat us as if we had been perfectly innocent. Indeed, the saints are without fault before the throne of God; for they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. The believer's sins no longer exist; and "if they are searched for they shall not be found; yea, they shall not be, saith the Lord."

"Who is a pardoning God like thee?  
And who hath grace so rich and free?"

Oh, that God would comfort his mourners by this sermon! I have a notion in my head that if when I was under the sense of sin I could have heard this subject handled, I should have found liberty at once. Though I had been hidden away in the back seat of the gallery out of sight, if only I had heard of such mercy as this, I should have jumped at it. I cannot tell how it might have been, for I do not remember hearing so plain a declaration of boundless grace. Oh, how I pray and hope that

the Lord will lead some poor soul to accept this unspeakable blessing ! Come, ye consciously guilty ones, and touch the silver sceptre of your reigning Saviour. He is ready to forgive : the atonement is made and accepted ; the Saviour who died has risen again ; therefore come to him, and be at peace. Oh, that the blessed Spirit may lead you to feel the power of the reconciling blood !

III. I finish with the blessed fact that FORGIVENESS IS TO BE HAD. How is it to be had ? Let me speak briefly, and do you catch up every word and think over it. Forgiveness is to be had through the atoning blood. Why does God forget our sin ? Is it not on this wise ?—he looks upon his son *Jesus bearing that sin*. Did you ever think of what God the Father sees in Jesus on the cross ? Why you and I have seen enough to make us break our hearts, but when the Father saw his only-begotten Son suffering even to death, it made such an infinite impression upon his great soul that he forgot the sins for which his Son gave his life. That new thing coming in, the most wonderful thing that God has on his heart, the death of the Only-begotten, made a clean erasure in the eternal memory of all the transgressions of those for whom Christ died. In such way doth he describe to us the mystery of forgiving love. Dear hearts, get under the shadow of the Redeemer's cross. Trust Jesus Christ now, and that blood is there and then applied to you, and your sins shall be remembered no more for ever, because he remembers his Son's suffering in your place and stead.

Next remember that this forgetfulness of God is caused by *overflowing mercy*. God is love : "His mercy endureth for ever" ; and he desired vent for his love. His great heart was filled with a desire to display the grace which pervaded his nature : he must be gracious, and he would be gracious ; and because of that divine resolve he cast our sins behind his back. Come, then, if you wish to have your sins forgiven ! Come and bow before the mercy of God. Plead not merit but mercy. Do not dare to approach the Lord on terms of law, but draw near on terms of grace. Here is a word for you which was said by an eminent saint when approaching his God : "Lord, I am hell, but thou art heaven." Here is a full description of yourself, and as blessed a description of God, as may be. Come, then, poor hell-deserving one and hide thyself in the heaven of everlasting love, and it shall be a haven of peace to thee for ever.

How does God forget sin ? Well, it is through his *everlasting love*. He loved his people before they fell ; and he loved his people when they fell. "I have loved thee," saith he, "with an everlasting love" ; and when that great love of his had led him to give his Son Jesus for his people's ransom, it made him also forget his people's sins. The Lord so loved his chosen that he said, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." Having shown his love by the gift of Jesus that love has covered a multitude of sins. Do you not see then that if you want to enter into this pardon, this forgetfulness of sin, you must come to God on the terms of his free love, and ask him to forgive you because his name is love ? "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness ; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions."

Again, God forgets his people's sins because of *the complacency he*

*has in them* as renewed and sanctified creatures. When he hears their cries of repentance, when he hears their declarations of faith, when he sees the love which his Spirit has wrought in them, when he beholds them growing more and more like his dear Son, he delights in them. His joy is fulfilled in them. He is well pleased with them, and communes with them lovingly. He observes their signs of grace and accepts them, and remembers their iniquities no more. Oh, then, you must come to God and ask him to change you, and to renew you, that he may have delight in you. Come and beseech him that you may be born again and made new creatures in Christ Jesus, for this must be if you are forgiven. There cannot be pardon of sin where there is not a renewal of the heart, and that must come from God by his sovereign grace alone.

Oh, you that would have the pardon of sin, come for it this morning in God's appointed way. "Repent," says he; that is, be sorry for your sin; change your mind about it and hate it, though once you loved it. Then confess it, for he saith, "only acknowledge thine iniquity." Get home and mourn your transgression before your offended Lord, sincerely, fully, and with deep regret, and then he will take away your sin, for it is written he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall find mercy. This is his way, then. Own that you are guilty but ask that you may be guilty no more.

Chief of all, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," and that saving includes an act of amnesty and oblivion as to all your sinful thoughts, and words, and acts. Trust the Lord Jesus Christ. There is the pith of it. Trust thyself in the hands that were nailed to the cross for thee: trust thyself to the love of the heart which was pierced with a spear, and forthwith there came out blood and water. Hast thou done this? Then thou art even now forgiven: thy sin has gone; it is cast into the depths of the sea. Go down those aisles with thy heart dancing within thee for delight, for there is nothing laid against thee now since thou art a believer in the Lord Jesus. God imputeth not iniquity to the man who has cast himself on the Saviour. Go thou hence and never forget thy sin, nor the mercy which has forgiven it. Always repent and always praise the Lord. Honour the forgetfulness of God in not remembering thy faults, and henceforth do thou tell this blessed news to everyone thou seest—there is forgiveness, such forgiveness as was never heard of until God himself revealed it by saying of his people, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." God bless you dear friends, henceforth and for ever. Amen.

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PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Jeremiah xxxi. 15—37.

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HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—152, 202, 371.