

## **FORGIVABLE AND UNPARDONABLE SINS.**

In view of the foregoing review of Future Retribution, some may inquire, If for every pernicious word and every willful misdeed, an account must be rendered and a punishment inflicted, wherein consists the *forgiveness* of sins, of which so much is said in Scripture? Does Scripture teach a difference between sins – that some are forgivable and others unpardonable?

We answer, that under the provisions of God's law of life, *no sin* is excusable; perfect obedience – righteousness, is the only condition of perfect life and happiness. Under this law the entire race was judged representatively in Adam, and through his willful disobedience, condemned to death – destruction – as unworthy of life, and the penalty – death – passed upon all. (Rom. 5:12.) They cannot be excused nor pardoned. The penalty is the just expression of the will and the law of God toward man – "The wages of sin is death."

But to give exercise to His love without varying or impairing his justice or his righteous and wise law, God arranged the plan by which Jesus as His agent became the Redeemer or Purchaser of the race, by becoming a man and tasting death FOR every man and thus gaining *the right* to set at liberty all the prisoners, in his own time and way, without opposition to or hindrance from Justice and its requirements.

Having obtained control and right to be master, owner, and Lord of all, Jesus will *exonerate* or grant forgiveness and remission of sins to all the race. He will however, require each individual to apply for the exoneration for himself, in order that each may fully realize his necessity and dependence, as well as the Lord's bounty in this *free* gift of justification, which he purchased for them with his own blood. He did all the purchasing; to them it is *free* for the asking and accepting.

This then is the *forgiveness* presented in the Bible – the free gift of God THROUGH Jesus Christ our Lord. Jehovah does not set aside his law to forgive: He could not: to revoke or set aside his laws, would be to unsettle his kingdom by the King antagonizing its laws himself. But his great gift to sinners, was Jesus, whose sacrificial death bought or ransomed man from death.

But for what did Jesus die? Not to grant sanction and license to sin and sinners. Not to permit men to continue to sin, but to release them from the *injuries* and *penalties* of their representative's failure; and in hope that the experience thus gained, might help each individual in the *new* trial, which by virtue of the ransom given, he wills, and has the right to give them – an individual trial.

If this be true, the sacrifice of Jesus while covering "many offences" (Rom. 5:16) covers and is the basis of forgiveness to only such offences as come more or less directly as a result of Adam's disobedience and fall. Hence it does not cover such sins as are not the results of Adamic weakness. It does not cover WILLFUL SINS, against light and ability.

While, therefore, we recognize this clear distinction between the two classes of sin, we must not forget that the depravity resulting from the "fall" and impairment of the moral as well as physical qualities of human nature, furnishes a tendency toward willful sin, even when the surrounding circumstances do not entirely mislead the judgment. Not being able to fully appreciate the weight and influence of circumstances, and depravity, is one reason why we may not decide against some whose professions and actions widely differ; we must, therefore, "judge nothing before the time."

Nevertheless Scripture lays down certain marks by which we must judge those whose professions and actions are at agreement. "Out of thine *own* mouth will I judge thee." The Lord in Matt. 12:31, and the apostles in Heb. 6:4,6, and 10:26-29 and 1 John 5:16 point out unforgivable sins, and in the light of our foregoing remarks we trust all

may be able to see to why these sins can not be forgiven, and do not come under the class for which a *ransom* was given by Jesus.

Our Lord addressed the Pharisees; in their presence he had healed the sick, cured the blind and lame, cast out devils, and even raised the dead; and though depravity through the "fall" might have so blinded them that they could not accept of Jesus as the promised Messiah, they were certainly *inexcusable* for saying as a last resort when they could find no fault – "We know that this man hath a devil" and casts out devils by the power of Beelzebub the prince of devils, v. 24. Such a manifestation of hatred, malice and opposition to light came not through the "fall" and cannot be forgiven as such, and so Jesus informs them: "All manner of sin and blasphemy [malicious words of opposition v. 36] [should be vs. 31 - site Editor] shall be forgiven unto men, *but* the blasphemy against the holy spirit shall not be forgiven unto men." They might reject Jesus and speak evil of him, misunderstanding him and his mission; but when a demonstration of the power [spirit] of God in doing a *good* work was manifested, though they might not have received it as a proof of Jesus' claims, they were inexcusable for attributing it to Satanic power.

If then, that blasphemy shall not be forgiven them, neither in this world [*age* – Jesus miracles and preaching were the commencement of the Gospel age as he is the head of the Gospel church] neither in the *future*, [age occurs but once in this text], what shall we say of those Pharisees, have they no hope for future life? We answer, they are not without hope; the blood of Christ was still applicable to cleanse from all Adamic sin, and though they shall never be forgiven for this willful opposition to, and blasphemy of God's holy power they may *expiate* that sin. That is to say they shall receive "stripes" or punishment in proportion to the willfulness of each of them.

A prisoner condemned to one year's imprisonment applies to the Governor for a pardon; it is refused; nevertheless when the limit of his condemnation has expired he will be released, having *expiated* his

offense. This serves as an illustration of how a sin might be expiated and the sinner survive. It should be noted however that if the penalty were death there could be no survival.

Next comes the question can all unforgivable sins be thus expiated and the sinner survive? We answer, No. The penalty for the Pharisees' willful sin was stripes and not (second) death, *because*, though sinning against light, it was not against *full and perfect* light and knowledge. To have acted and spoken as they did under *full* appreciation would have been punishable only with the *full* "wages of sin – death."

To some it may occur that they were "blinded" by sin and Satan, and hence not at all responsible for their course. To this we reply, that while it is freely admitted by all, and the Scriptures plainly declare, that blindness *in part* is upon all the children of Adam through the fall, yet from Jesus' words we must conclude that these Pharisees were not totally blind. None except idiots and maniacs are *totally* blind. It was to these same Pharisees that Jesus said "If I had not done among you the works which none other man did ye had not had sin." "This is the condemnation – that light is come into the world and men love darkness rather than light." (Jno. 15:24, and 3:19.) If you were blind totally you would not have been responsible but now you admit that you see some, therefore you have sin. Jno. 9:41.

The sacrifice of Christ will be applicable to cleanse from and forgive, all sin and results of sinful influences which are the results of Adam's fall. A ransom was provided because Adam and his race [R724 : page 4] had not fully appreciated the results of sin "in hope" (Rom. 8:20) that many after having experienced would appreciate and shun sin and its wages. But these Pharisees and the entire race have by experience obtained that knowledge. That they were blinded by their own *willful* prejudice beyond that prejudice engendered by the fall, is evident, because while they ascribed Jesus' works to Satan, others no less depraved, asked, "Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" "For no man can do these miracles... unless God be with him." Jno. 10:21, 3:2.

Their sin was incomplete – not unto death because, first, they had not yet come in contact with all the light, truth and evidence which God considers necessary to a trial for LIFE; and secondly, because of a measure of blindness, they had not fully appreciated, the light against which they sinned. Hence, we repeat, the sin of each of them was proportioned to his wilfulness in opposing what he did discern, and this is unforgivable in any age.

Others may suggest, that if the Pharisees shall and may expiate or suffer the penalty of their measure of willful sin so may others. Just so, we respond, and it is because the world will be thus punished that Scripture informs of the many and few stripes (Luke 12:47,48), in the age to come; and that "God knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." What we need constantly to have in mind however, is, that the punishment will be a "*just* recompense of reward" upon every soul that doeth evil.

But if such sins against only a measure of responsibility and light may be expiated, why might not such a course have been adopted with Adam? why might not he and others have *expiated* sin by sufferings and thus no *ransom price* have been needed? Has God *changed*? Does he now say sin may be expiated by the sinner and did he then say, Sin cannot be expiated, the very EXISTENCE of the sinner is the penalty?

No God has not changed – neither his laws which represent him – "I am the same and change not." (Mal. 3:6.) The difference is this: Adam was *perfect*, not fallen, not blinded in the least degree, and in his purity, innocency and holiness had no sectarian system to uphold and no proud theory to maintain: the Pharisees were greatly fallen, very imperfect, and much blinded. Adam had full intercourse and communion with Jehovah, witnessed his power in his own *perfect* talents, and had the law of God inwrought in his very nature – was a moral image of God in flesh. The Pharisees had in common with all others of the fallen race lost the intercourse and communion: The moral image was well-nigh effaced, the heart of flesh

had turned to stone and the law of God written thereon had been almost obliterated.

Hence, for the perfect Adam to sin wilfully against perfect and unquestioned evidences was in the *fullest* sense sin, and justly received the fullest penalty – not stripes, but *death* – extinction. He has been under that penalty ever since condemned to it. The penalty commenced with the process of dying, and for over five thousand years he has been subjected to the full *penalty* of his transgression, death. He would have so continued, dead to all eternity, had not a substitute given himself a ransom, and *taken his place in death*. And this is true of all the race whom Adam represented in the first trial.

Just so with the second death. It is the penalty of full, complete and willful transgression against full, complete knowledge and ability. It is evident, then, that the Pharisees did not commit sin unto death because of lack of light and ability, and just as evident that any one through the acceptance of the *ransom* fully recovered out of the degradation and imperfections resulting from Adam's transgression and brought to a full, realizing sense of his relationship to God, etc., COULD commit the sin unto death – the second death, by *willful* sin against light and ability, or by a *willful* rejection of the *ransom*-sacrifice, through faith in which, they had once been released from Adamic guilt and penalty.

In view of the foregoing the question arises, could anyone commit the willful sin and come under the penalty of the second death until they had first been entirely freed from every result of the Adamic death? Could such willful sin against full knowledge, ability and light be committed in the Gospel age – must it not belong exclusively to the Millennial age?

It would seem so, at first thought. But the Scriptures point out a small – very small class, which could commit this sin now. That it is a very small class *in the church*, is evident from the apostles description of the advantages and knowledge they must first have enjoyed, as

recorded in Heb. 6:4-6. Those who [R724 : page 5] have been once enlightened [whose eyes have been opened]; who have tasted of the heavenly gift [realized and enjoyed forgiveness of sins through the redemption in Jesus, whom God gave to be a propitiation for our sins]; who have been made partakers of the holy spirit [and thus come to appreciate God's holy will and have full fellowship and communion with him as Adam had before the fall]; who have tasted the good word of God [appreciating the richness and sweetness of its promises – which but few yet do]; who have tasted also the powers of the age to come [come to realize the powers which will in the next age hold sway and restore and bless the dead race – both in and out of the tomb]; If *such* shall fall away, it is *impossible* to renew them again unto repentance.

They have fully enjoyed all the blessings and privileges secured to any by the ransom, and have made no use of them. Such would really be making the redemption provided through Jesus sacrifice of no value to themselves by failure to make use of the privileges and blessings offered. Thus in act they put Christ to an *open shame*, as though they said: You died and redeemed us but we spurn and reject the privileges and opportunity thus afforded. Such do wilfully what the Roman soldiers did ignorantly viz., reject and crucify him who laid down his life on their behalf.

Is it asked, How could these described by the apostle be said to have enjoyed fully all the blessings resultant from Jesus ransom, during this age? We reply that here comes in the province of faith. By faith they grasped the heavenly gift and realized that they were *redeemed* by his precious blood. By faith they tasted and appreciated the goodness of the promises of God's Word, realized the powers of the coming age and partook of the mind or spirit of God. All the imperfections resultant from the Adamic fall were reckoned covered, with the perfection of their Redeemer who gave himself for all; and every good endeavor, ever so imperfect in itself was *reckoned* as a *perfect work* when presented covered with the righteousness of the Redeemer. His

righteousness imputed to our sanctified efforts makes them acceptable *as* perfect before our heavenly Father. Without his merit attached our efforts and sacrifices would be unacceptable as shown in the argument of the same apostle, Heb. 10:26,29.

He here shows another class liable to the second-death. He addresses still the saints and speaks specially of those who have fully received by faith the privileges accruing through the ransom. He assures them that any who reject the blood of Christ – the price of their redemption – counting the blood of the covenant wherewith they *had been sanctified* common and ordinary *and not* specially sacred and precious, attempting to stand in their own righteousness ignoring Christ's ransom, have no longer any interest in the sacrifice for sins. If the rejection of the typical mediator, Moses, was worthy of death, of how much *sorer* [greater] punishment will such as despise the sacrifice offered by the great antitypical Mediator be thought worthy? is the apostles query.

The despisers of Moses' arrangements [see Lev. 10:1-3] who attempted to present themselves before the Lord with unauthorized incense of their own instead of that authorized, which represented Christ's righteousness, perished – died. But this was merely a hastening to completion of the Adamic death penalty already in force against them, hence not so serious as the matter which it typified – the rejection of the real incense or merit of the better sacrifice and its penalty the second-death from which there is no hope of a resurrection.

In view of this argument which he presents, no wonder the Apostle concludes that, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (v. 31.) God has expressed to us his abhorrence of sin and his intention to utterly root it out, at the same time providing a ransom, a way of escape by which we may be freely justified: but, if we after coming to a full knowledge and appreciation of His gracious provision wilfully ignore and reject the sin-offering which God provided for us, we dishonor God and the Lamb and go out from the protection

provided, into the fiery *indignation* which devours [destroys] God's adversaries.

Nor can the reasonableness of this, God's plan, be questioned. Such as are once fully enlightened, as described Heb. 6:4-6, and then *wilfully* reject God's favors whether by open sin or by a denial of the value of the "blood of the covenant," could not evidently be benefitted by a *continuance* of God's favor, seeing they have had, full and abundant opportunity. Besides this, the Apostle declares: "It is *impossible* to renew them again unto repentance." What is impossible could not be accomplished in a million ages, and would not be attempted by our God of infinite wisdom.

Now, casting our minds backward and keeping in mind the DIVERSIFIED WISDOM OF GOD (See Dec'r. issue.), let us notice that God could have dealt otherwise than as he did with man, but not according to his wisdom. **[R725 : page 5]**

We cannot but suppose that "Those angels which kept not their first estate" sinned *wilfully* against light and knowledge, and therefore, that they, as well as the Adamic race, had both been put under the same law, would have been punished also with death. This must not lead us to suppose God's laws variable or unequal, for as shown in our Dec. issue, it has always been God's mind that willful sin shall be punished with death, but thus far this law has only been placed over mankind – they being made a "spectacle" or example to angels, who, meantime, have not been placed under the full and final penalty of the law. But they shall eventually be under the same law after they have witnessed the full outworkings of good and evil, obedience and disobedience, as illustrated in mankind.

We also saw in that issue, that the favor of God granted to "those angels," in giving them experience with sin and an illustration of its final results, before placing them under the full law and its penalty, was amply compensated for or balanced by his favor to man in granting him

a redemption and recovery from his first offense, through Christ Jesus a ransom.

In conclusion, the sin unto death is not one act of one moment. None could *happen* to commit it. It is not a "slip" or a "stumble" which constitutes the sin unto death. The slips, happenings and stumblings are evidently occasioned by our inherited imperfection; they are among the injuries occasioned by the Adamic "fall," and are *all* fully covered and fully forgivable, and cleansable by the application of the precious blood of "the Lamb of God which taketh away THE sin of the world." Every evil, whether in act, word or thought, or every propensity toward evil inherited by us, is fully atoned for by Jesus already. (Rom. 5:19.) And all that remains is for us to acknowledge his ransom work and apply for our share in its results.

The sin which is unto death is a complete rejection of God's favors, against full light and understanding; and only the very few, the saints, could possibly do this at present, because only they have the light and appreciation necessary. In due time all shall come to this full knowledge, and then whosoever *will*, may obey and live forever.

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