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THE BLOTTING OUT OF SINS

"Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." – Acts 3:19.

ALL WHO have turned from sin and accepted Christ and made a full consecration of themselves to the Divine will, and have been accepted of God by the begetting of the Spirit, have their sins reckoned as covered or put away from Divine sight. So far as the New Creature is concerned, they commit no sin; but so far as their flesh is concerned, through which alone they can at present have conscious being, they are imperfect. These imperfections of the flesh, unwillingly theirs, are figuratively said to be covered with the Wedding Robe of Christ's Righteousness, imputed to them. The Church, however, hopes not to continue always in this merely imputed condition of righteousness, but to obtain eventually an actual righteousness. The Lord's Word guarantees that this shall be the Church's portion by virtue of a share in the "First Resurrection," "his resurrection."

When that which is sown in weakness shall have been raised in power; when that which is sown in dishonor shall have been raised in glory; when that which is sown [R4659 : page 251] an animal body shall have been raised a spiritual body, then, so far as the Church is concerned, the blotting out of sin in the most absolute and complete sense will have been effected – but not until then. At present the Church's sins are *covered*, by Divine arrangement, through the great Advocate, Jesus. So, then, we see that this blotting out of the Church's sins will give her precedence over all the world of mankind; and following the blotting out of her sins in the "First Resurrection," will begin the Restitution work for all Israel and through them for all mankind.

THE NEW COVENANT ISRAELITISH

It might be asked, would the two texts (Romans 11:27; Acts 3:19,20) prove that the New Covenant will not be made until the completion of the sacrifice of all the members of the Body of Christ, until after the merit of Christ's sacrifice shall have been applied, at the end of the Gospel Age, on behalf of the world?

It is most conclusively proved in these texts, as well as in many others, that the New Covenant cannot go into effect with the people of Israel until the end of this Gospel Age. We are to remember, however, that the Lord has made a distinct provision by which all the "called" ones of this Gospel Age may come into Covenant relationship with him through Christ, through faith in the precious blood and consecration unto death, through justification by the merit of the great Advocate. These, however, could not maintain their Covenant relationship with God were it not for their privilege of going to the Throne of heavenly grace and there receiving mercy through the intercession of their Advocate for those trespasses which are unwillingly theirs as New Creatures.

This expression, New Covenant, is not used in connection with any others of mankind than the Jews, because it is not true that God will make a New Covenant with the remainder of mankind. As the Apostle suggests, the word "New" here implies a previous Covenant which was counted *Old*, and this Old Covenant was not made with other nations or peoples than the Jews, of whom God declared that he "took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, which my Covenant they brake." (Jer. 31:32.) Hence, we should understand that all references to the New Covenant are references to God's arrangement with the Jewish people to supplant the old arrangement under Moses, under the conditions of which they are still condemned and

bound. By this New, substitutionary Covenant, God will shortly release the Jew from the condemnation of the Old Covenant.

It will be in an incidental way that other nations will be granted the privilege of coming under the same laws and arrangements with natural Israel, and of sharing with Israel in the blotting out of sin and in being restored to the Divine image and thus to full harmony and fellowship and Covenant relationship with God, which relationship all may maintain, if they will, throughout eternity. But we see that some of these who will thus be brought into Covenant relationship and turned over to God at the end of the Millennial Age will fail to maintain that relationship; and that under the testing incidental to the release of Satan at the end of the thousand years, some will manifest disloyalty and lose this standing and again fall into the condemnation of death – the "Second Death."

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We are not necessarily to understand the blotting out of sin to signify the blotting out of the *recognition* of sin. We may rather assume that through all eternity this great insurrection or rebellion – the reign of sin and death for 6,000 years upon this earth – will be a standing lesson to all of God's creatures throughout his Universe. True, it is said of Israel, "Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more," but this should be understood as signifying that their sins will be remembered no more *against them* in a condemnatory sense. In that sense of the word, and in every evil and unsatisfactory sense, these sins will be remembered *no more*; but as *lessons* of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and of the Justice of God in punishing it, and of the love of God in providing redemption from it – in this sense sin will doubtless always be remembered.

The sense, then, in which this text applies to the blotting out of sins would be this: Sin and imperfection are written in all our

mortal bodies. Not only does sin put its heavy hand upon us through death – the destruction of our physical frame in general – but it specially leaves its mark upon the mind, and upon the face – the index of the character. The blotting out of sin, therefore, or the lifting of individuals out of sin, out of imperfection, out of their blemished condition, will signify their uplifting to all those glorious qualities of heart and mind and body which were Father Adam's portion in the beginning, when he was in the image and likeness of God.

In the case of the Church and her change in the "First Resurrection" the blotting out will not be a slow and gradual process, but an instantaneous blotting out. Her change will be "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." The Apostle tells us that the change effected thus in the Church will be glorious; that we shall be made like him who is the "express image of the Father's person." We shall see him as he is and share his glory.

