

WALKING IN THE LIGHT AND WASHED IN THE BLOOD

NO. 663

A SERMON
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*“But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another,
 and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.”*
1 John 1:7.

THERE are two great powers in conflict in this world. One is the power of good, of which God is the King, and the other is the power of evil, which is represented by the prince of the power of the air, even Satan. The first principle is set forth by John under the figure of *light*. God himself is essential light, and everything which is good in the world is an emanation from Himself. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning.” The light is the evident emblem of the truth of God; darkness is the symbol of error. Light represents holiness; darkness is the appropriate figure for sin. Light represents knowledge, especially of spiritual things, since light reveals; darkness is the fit token of the ignorance under which the natural mind labors perpetually. By nature, we are all born under the dominion of darkness—we grope our way like blind men, and when we knew God by the light of His works, we glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in our imaginations, and our foolish heart was darkened. Naturally, spiritual things are not discernible by man, they are spiritual and spiritually discerned, and the carnal mind cannot perceive them, for it walks in darkness. The guilt of sin is a thing too high for the carnal mind to understand; the glory of the eternal sacrifice it cannot perceive. The excellence of God, the faithfulness of His promise and the validity of His covenant, all such things as these are swathed in mist, so that the carnal mind sees them not. As soon as ever the grace of God comes into the heart, it makes as great a difference as did the eternal decree of Jehovah, when He said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

As soon as God the Holy Spirit begins to work upon the soul of man to illuminate him, he perceives at once his own sinfulness, he abhors that sinfulness, he labors to escape from it, he cries out for a remedy, he finds it in Christ; therefore, he no longer loves sin. He is not guided any longer by the darkness of policy, and selfishness, and error, but he walks after the light of the truth of God, of righteousness, of holiness, of true knowledge. God has brought him into His light—he sees now what he never saw before; he knows, feels, believes, recognizes what he never had known anything of before—*he is in the light of God*. Therefore, you constantly find the Christian called a child of light, and he is warned that he is of the light and of the day. He is told, “You are not of the night, nor of darkness.” “You were sometime darkness, but now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of light.”

You perceive in the text, then, that the Christian is spoken of as a man who is in the light. But there is something more said of him than this. He is practically in the light, “if we walk in the light.” It is of no use to pretend to have light in the brain—so as to comprehend all knowledge, so as to be sound and orthodox in one’s doctrinal opinions—this will be of no vital service so far as the great point of *salvation* is concerned. A man may think he has much light, but if it is only notional and doctrinal, and is not the light of God which enlightens his nature, and develops itself in his practical walk, he lies when he talks of being in the light, for he is in darkness altogether. Nor is it truthful to pretend or profess that we have light within in the form of experience, if we do not walk in it, for where the light is true, it is quite certain to show itself abroad. If there is a candle within the lantern, its light will stream forth into the surrounding darkness, and those who have eyes will be able to see it. I have no right to say I have the light of God unless I walk in it. The apostle is very peremptory with those who so speak. He says, “He who says I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” The Christian,

then, is in the light, and he is *practically* in it; his walk and conversation are regulated by the truth of God, by holiness, and by that divine knowledge which God has been pleased to bestow upon him. He walks in the light of faith, in another path than that which is trod by men who have nothing but the light of sense. He sees Him who is invisible, and the sight of the invisible God operates upon his soul; he looks into eternity. He marks the dread reward of sin, and the blessed gift of God to those who trust in Jesus, and eternal realities have an effect upon his whole manner and conversation—from now on, he is a man in the light, walking in that light.

There is a very strong description given here—“If we walk in the light as *He is in the light.*” Beloved, the thought of that dazzles me. I have tried to look it in the face, but I cannot endure it. If we walk in the light as God is in the light. Can we ever attain to this? Shall poor flesh and blood ever be able to walk as clearly in the light of God as He is whom we call, “Our Father,” of whom it is written, “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all”? Let us say this much, and then commend this wonderful expression to your meditations. Certainly, this is the model which is set before us, for the Savior Himself said, “Be you perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect,” and if we take anything short of absolute perfection as our model of life, we shall certainly, even if we should attain to our ideal, fall short of the glory of God. Beloved, when a schoolmaster writes the copy at the head of the page, he does not expect that the boy will come up to the copy; but then if the copy is not a perfect one, it is not fit to be imitated by a child; and so our God gives us Himself as the pattern and copy, “Be you imitators of God as dear children,” for nothing short of Himself would be a worthy model. Though we, as life sculptors, may feel that we can never rival the perfection of God, yet we are to seek after it, and never to be satisfied until we attain it. The youthful artist, as he grasps his early pencil, can hardly hope to equal Raphael or Michelangelo, but still, if he did not have a noble ideal before his mind, he would only attain to something very mean and ordinary. Heavenly fingers point us to the Lord Jesus as the great Exemplar of His people, and the Holy Spirit works in us a likeness to Him.

But what does it mean that the Christian is to walk in light as God is in the light? We conceive it to import likeness, but not degree. We are as truly in the light, we are as heartily in the light, and we are as sincerely in the light, as honestly in the light, though we cannot be there in the same degree. I cannot dwell in the sun—it is too bright a place for my residence—unless I shall be transformed, like Uriel, Milton’s angel who could dwell in the midst of the blaze of its excessive glory, but I can *walk* in the light of the sun though I cannot dwell in it; and so God is the light. He is Himself the Sun, and I can walk in the light as He is in the light, though I cannot attain to the same degree of perfection, and excellence, and purity, and truth in which the Lord, Himself, resides. Trapp is always giving us the truth of God in a way in which we can remember it—so he says we are to be in the light as God is in the light for *quality*; but not for *equality*; we are to have the same light and as truly to have it, and walk in it as God does, though as for *equality* with God in His holiness and perfection—that must be left until we cross the Jordan and enter into the perfection of the Most High.

Having thus briefly sketched the character of the genuine Christian, observe, beloved, that he is the possessor of two privileges. The first is *fellowship with God*. “We have fellowship one with another.” And the second is *complete cleansing from sin*—“and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.”

The first privilege we will have but a word upon—it is *fellowship with God*. As you read this verse in our translation, it looks very much as if all that was meant was fellowship with your brother Christians; but this, according to able critics, would not convey the sense of the original. The Arabic version renders it, “God with us, and we with Him,” and several copies read, “We have fellowship with Him.” Our version almost compels you to think of fellowship with other believers, but such is not the intention of the Spirit. “We have mutual fellowship, between God and our souls—there is communion.” This is the sense of the passage. God is light—we walk in the light of God—we agree. “Can two walk together unless they are agreed?” It is clear we are agreed as to the principles which we shall advance—God is the champion of truth, so are we; God is the promoter of holiness, so are we; God seeks that love may reign instead of selfishness, so does the Christian. God hates error, and spares no arrows to destroy it. The Christian also contends earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. God is pure, and the pure

in heart shall see God. God is holiness, and those who are holy are attracted to God from an affinity of nature, even as the needle is attracted to its pole. If the Lord has visited you and made you to walk in His light, you shall surely have fellowship with God your Father. He who is in darkness cannot have fellowship with God. Veiled in ignorance, guided by passion, controlled by error, led astray by falsehood—how can you aspire to talk with your God? Your prayer is but a chattering sound; your song is the clang of a sounding brass, the noise of a tinkling cymbal! Your devotion bears you no further than the letter which kills; but oh, poor soul, if God should take you out of your darkness, and make you to see yourself, to see Him and follow after truth and righteousness and holiness, why then your prayer would be heard in heaven, your song would mingle with the sweet notes of celestial harps, and even your groans and tears would reach your Father's heart, for you would enjoy fellowship with Him. If we walk with God as God is in the light, the secret of God is with us, and our secret is with God. He opens His heart to us and we open our heart to Him—we become friends—we are bound and knit together so that being made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust, we live like Enoch, having our conversation above the skies.

Upon the second privilege we intend to dwell. I have been driven to this text, and yet I have been afraid of it. This text has been handled, the latter part of it, I mean, very often out of its context. Yet it has had such a comforting influence on many souls that I have been half afraid to discourse upon it in its true context, and yet I have felt, "Well, if anything I should say should take away any comfort from any seeking soul, I shall be very sorry, but I cannot help it." I do feel that it is essential to the Christian ministry not to pick passages out of God's Word and tear them away from the context, but to take them as they stand. As this text stands, it does not seem to me to gleam with the particular ray of comfort which others see in it, but it has another beam of joy even more radiant. God's Word must be taken as God speaks it—we have no right to divide the living child of divine truth, or wrest it to make it mean other than it does. According to the text, special pardon of sin is the peculiar privilege of those who walk in the light as God is in the light, and it is not the privilege of anyone else. Only those who have been brought by divine grace from a state of nature into a state of grace, and walk in the light of God, may claim the possession of perfect cleansing through the blood of Jesus Christ.

In dwelling upon this latter part of the verse, there seemed to me to be seven things in it which any thoughtful reader would be struck with. Considered as the privilege of every man who, however limpingly, is walking in the light, this word, which tells of pardon bought with blood, is very precious—a crown set with jewels; to seven choice pearls, I invite your loving gaze.

1. The first thing that struck me was THE GREATNESS of everything in the text.

In some places, everything is little—you can talk with some men—their thoughts, their ideas are all little; almost everything is drawn to a scale, and aspiring minds generally draw their matters to as great a scale as they can find, but that is necessarily a little one. See to what a magnificent scale everything is drawn in our text! Think, Beloved, *how great the sin of God's people is!* Will you try and get that thought into your minds, how great is your own sin—your sin before conversion—think that over—your sin while seeking the Lord, in putting confidence in your own works and looking after refuges of lies. Your sins since conversion—turn them over. Beloved, one sin towers up like an Alp, but we have many sins heaped upon each other, as in the old fable of the giants who piled Pelion upon Ossa, mountain upon mountain. O God, what a mass of sin is there in the life of one of Your most pure and most sanctified children! Multiply this; all the sin of one child of God—multiply it by the number of those contained in that word, "us." "Cleanses us from all sin!" How many are God's children? God's Word shall answer, "A multitude that no man can number, out of all kindreds and peoples and tongues stood before the throne." Can you imagine—deep as hell's bottomless pit; high as heaven's own glory, for sin sought to pluck even God out of His throne; wide as the east is from the west; long as eternity is this great mass of the guilt of the people for whom Christ shed His blood! And yet all this is taken away! "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin."

Then, observe *the greatness of the atonement offered.* Will you inwardly digest those words, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son"? Blood is at all times precious, but this is no blood of a mere *man*—it is the blood of an innocent man—better still, it is the blood of man in union with Deity—"His Son!" God's

Son! Why, angels cast their crowns before Him! All the choral symphonies of heaven surround His glorious throne. “God over all, blessed forever. Amen.” And yet He yields His blood; takes upon Himself the form of a servant, and then is scourged and pierced, bruised and torn, and at last, slain; for nothing but the blood of Deity could make atonement for human sin. The atonement must be no man, merely—He must be the God-man Mediator, the fellow of Jehovah, co-equal and co-eternal with Him—He must bear the pangs and bitterness of divine wrath which was due to sin. Think of this—a sacrifice which no human mind can ever properly estimate in the infinity of its value! Here, indeed, we have greatness—great sin, but a great atonement!

Think again—we have here great love which provided such a sacrifice. Oh, how He must have loved, to have descended from heaven to earth, and from earth to the grave! How He must have loved, to have chosen us, when we were hating Him—when we were enemies, He has reconciled us unto God by His own death! Dead in trespasses and sins, corrupt, wrapped up in the grave clothes of evil habits, hateful and hating one another, full of sin, and every abomination, yet He loved us so as to yield up His soul unto death for us. We are dealing with great things here indeed, and we must not forget *the greatness of the influence which such an atonement, the result of such love, must have upon the Christian’s heart.* Oh, the greatness of the peace which passes all understanding, which flows from this great atonement! Oh, the greatness of the gratitude which must blaze forth from such a sacred fire as this! Oh, the greatness of the hatred of sin, of the revenge against iniquity, which must spring from a sense of such love, when it is shed abroad in the heart! You are citizens enjoying no mean privilege, oh, you blood-bought citizens of a blood-bought city. God has loved you. You cannot, though I should allot you a whole lifetime—you cannot get to the depth of that love. God has loved you, and to prove His love, He has died in the person of man for you. He loves you, and has overcome the dread result of all your fearful sin; and now, by the love which God has manifested, we do pray you let your holiness, your truthfulness, and your zeal, prove that you understand the greatness of those things. If your heart can really conceive the greatness of the things here revealed—the great sin, the great Savior, offering Himself out of great love, that He might make you to be greatly privileged—I am sure your hearts will rejoice.

2. The next thing which sparkles in the text is its SIMPLE SOLITARINESS—“We have fellowship one with another.” And then, it is added as a simple, gloriously simple, statement, “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” Observe, there is nothing said about rites and ceremonies. It does not begin by saying, “And the waters of baptism, together with the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us”—not a word, whether it shall be the sprinkling in infancy, or immersion of believers, nothing is said about it—it is the blood, the *blood* only, without a drop of baptismal water! *Nothing is here said about sacraments*—what some call, “the blessed Eucharist,” is not dragged in here—nothing about eating bread and drinking wine—it is the blood, nothing but the *blood*—“The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son.” And if nothing is said of rites that *God* has given, rites that *man* has invented are equally excluded! Not a syllable is uttered concerning celibacy or monasticism; not a breath about vows of perpetual chastity and poverty; not a hint about confession to a priest and human absolution, not an allusion to penance or extreme unction. “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.”

It was well done by a poor woman who, as she lay sick, heard for the first time the precious gospel of her salvation. She was told that the blood alone cleansed from sin; she believed, and then, putting her hand into her bosom, she took out a little crucifix which she had always worn, hanging from a chain about her neck, and said to the preacher, “Then I don’t need this, sir.” Ah, truly so, and so may we say of everything that man has devised as a consolation to a poor wounded spirit. “I have found Jesus, and I do not need that, sir.” You who need it, keep it—but as for us, if we walk in the light as He is in the light—the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, so completely purges us from all sin, that we dare not look to anything else lest we come into the bondage of the beggarly elements of this world.

You will perceive, too, that *nothing is said about Christian experience as a means of cleansing.* “What?” says one, “Does not the first sentences of the verse imply that?” Assuredly not, for you perceive that the first sentence of the verse does not interfere, though it is linked, with the other; if I walk in the light as God is in the light, what then? Does my walking in the light of God take away my sins? Not at all! I am as much a sinner in the light as in the darkness, if it were possible for me to be in the light

without being washed in the blood. Well, but we have fellowship with God, and does not having fellowship with God take away sin? Beloved, do not misunderstand me! No man can have fellowship with God unless sin is taken away—but his fellowship with God, and his walking in the light of God, does not take away his sin—not at all. The whole process of the removal of sin is here, “And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” I beg to repeat it—the text does not say that our walking in the light cleanses us from sin, it does not say that our having fellowship with God cleanses us from sin—these are the result of cleansing, but they have no connection as cause and result—it is the blood, and the *blood alone* which purges us from sin.

The dying thief looked to Christ, and sin was taken away by the blood; and there is a brother in Christ here, who has had such an experience of Christ’s love for 60 years, that his heart is now like a shock of corn, ripe for heaven. he lives in his Master’s presence, he spends the most of his time in his Master’s service; but, beloved, there is not a single atom of difference between him and the dying thief, so far as the cleansing away of sin is concerned. The blood cleansed the thief, and the same blood washes this advanced and full-grown Christian, or otherwise he is still unclean.

Observe, yet again, that in the verse *there is no hint given of any emotions, feelings, or attainments as co-operating with the blood to take away sin.* Christ took the sins of His people, and was punished for those sins, as if He had been Himself a sinner, and so sin is taken away from us. But in no sense, degree, shape or form, is sin removed by attainments, emotions, feelings, or experiences. The blood is the *only* atonement—the blood, without any mixture of anything else, completes and finishes the work, “For you are complete in Him.”

Now I could enlarge for a very long time on this point, but I do not think I shall. I will rather throw into a sentence or two a little direction, and observe that, whereas there are some who urge you to look to your doctrinal intelligence as a ground of comfort, I beseech you, beloved, look only to the blood! Whereas there are others who would set up a standard of Christian experience and urge that this is to be the channel of your consolation, I pray you, while you prize both doctrine and experience, rest not your soul’s weight but in the precious blood. Some would lead you to high degrees of fellowship; follow them, but not when they would lead you away from the simple position of a sinner resting upon the blood. There are those who could teach you mysticism, and would have you rejoice in the light within—follow them as far as they have the warrant of God’s Word, but never take your foot from that Rock of Ages, where the only safe standing can be found. Certain of my brothers are very fond of preaching Christ in His second coming—I rejoice that they preach the truth concerning Christ glorified, but, my beloved, I do beseech you, do not place your hope on Christ glorified, nor on Christ to come, but on “Christ crucified.” Remember that in the matter of taking away sin, the first thing is not the throne, but the cross—not the *reigning* Savior—but the *bleeding* Savior; not the King in His glory, but the Redeemer in His shame. Care not to be studying dates of prophecies if burdened with sin, but seek your chief, your best comfort in the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanses us from all sin—here is the pole star of your salvation—sail by it and you shall reach the port of peace.

3. A third brilliant flash in the light of God, namely, THE COMPLETENESS of the cleansing. “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from *all sin*”—not from some sin, but, “from *all sin*.” Beloved, I cannot tell you the exceeding sweetness of this Word, but I pray God the Holy Spirit to give you a taste of it. There is original sin, by which we fell in Adam before we were born, and there is inherited sin through which we were born in sin and shaped in iniquity; there is actual sin—the sin of my youth and my former transgressions, the sins of my riper years, the sins which defile the hoary head, and make that which should be a crown of glory to be a crown of grief—but all these sins, original and actual, are *all gone! All gone!* Sins against the law, though they are exceedingly broad, so that they make me a sinner in thought, in word, in deed, in heart—they are all gone. Sins against the gospel, when I kicked against the pricks, when I stifled conscience, when I resisted the Holy Spirit as did also my fathers—when I hated the truth of God, and would not have it because my deeds were evil, and I would not come to the light lest my deeds might be reproved; sins when I would regard none of the sweet invitations of the gospel—all cleansed away! Sins against Christ Jesus since my conversion, when I have backslidden

and my heart has been cold towards Him; sins against the Holy Spirit, when I have followed my own impulses instead of the indwelling Deity—all gone!

The Roman Catholic divides sin into venial sins and mortal sins. Be it so—the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from *all sin*, mortal or venial, deadly or pardonable. Sins of commission—here is a long catalog—think it over; sins of omission—that is still a larger list! The things which we have left undone which we ought to have done are probably more numerous than the things which we have done which we ought not to have done—all are gone! Some sins are greater than others. There is no doubt whatever that adultery, fornication, murder, blasphemy, and such like are greater than the sins of daily life—but whether they are great sins or little sins—they are all gone! That same God who took away the plague of flies from Egypt also took away the plague of thunder and of lightning. All are gone—gone at once! Pharaoh's chariot is drowned in the Red Sea, and the mean Egyptian is drowned in the same way. The depths have covered them; there is not one of them left. There are sins against God—how many there are! Sins of breaking His day and despising His Word—profaning His name, forgetting Him, and not loving Him—but He blots out all! Sins against my friends and my enemies, against my neighbor, against my father, my child, my wife—sins in all relationships—yet all are gone! Then, too, remember there are sins of presumption, and sins of ignorance—sins done willfully, and unknown sins—the blood cleanses us from ALL sin! Shall I go on? Surely I need not! But you see the purging is complete. Whether the bill is little or the bill is great, the same receipt can discharge one as the other. The blood of Jesus Christ is as blessed and divine a payment for the sin of blaspheming Peter as it is for the sin of loving John, and our iniquity is gone, all gone at once, and all gone forever. Blessed completeness! What a sweet theme to dwell upon!

4. The next gem that studs the text is the thought of PRESENTNESS. “Cleanses” says the text—not “*shall cleanse*.” There are multitudes who think that, as a dying hope, they may look forward to pardon, and perhaps, within a few hours of their dissolution, they may be able to say, “My sins are pardoned.” Such can never have read God's Word, or, if they have read it, they have read it with unbelieving eyes. Beloved, I would not give the snap of my finger for the bare possibility of cleansing when I come to die. Oh, how infinitely better to have cleansing now! Some imagine that a sense of pardon is an attainment after many years of Christian experience. For a young Christian to say, “My sins are forgiven,” seems to them to be an untimely fig, ripe too soon; but, beloved, it is not so. The moment a sinner trusts Jesus, that sinner is as fully forgiven as he will be when the light of the glory of God shall shine upon his resurrection countenance. Beloved, forgiveness of sin is a present thing—a privilege for this day, a joy for this very hour; and whoever walks in the light, as God is in the light, has fellowship with God, and has, at this moment, the perfect pardon of sin.

You perceive that it is written in the present tense as if to indicate continuance—it will always be so with you, Christian. It was so yesterday—it was “*cleanses*” yesterday, it is “*cleanses*” today—it will be “*cleanses*” tomorrow. It will be “*cleanses*” until you cross the river—every day you may come to Christ, this fountain, for it “*cleanses!*” Every hour you may stand by its brim, for it “*cleanses.*” I think there is sanctification here as well as justification. I am inclined to believe that this text has been too much limited in its interpretation, and that it signifies that the blood of Jesus is constantly operating upon the man who walks in the light of God so as to cleanse him from the indwelling power of sin; and the Spirit of God applies the doctrine of the atonement to the production of purity, till the soul becomes completely pure from sin at the last. I desire to feel every day the constantly purifying effect of the sacrifice of my Lord and Master. Look at the foot of the cross, and I am sure you will feel that the precious drops cleanse from all sin.

5. Now, in the fifth place, the text presents to us very blessedly the thought of CERTAINTY. It is not, “Perhaps the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from sin.” The text speaks of it as a *fact* not to be disputed—it does do so. To the believer, this is matter of certainty, for the Spirit of God bears witness with our spirits that we are born of God. Our spirit, in the joy and peace which it receives through believing, becomes assured of its being cleansed, and then the Spirit of God comes in as a second witness and bears witness with our spirit that we are born of God. My being cleansed from all sin today is to me as much a matter of consciousness as my being better in health. I was conscious of pain when I lay on my

sick bed, and so when I was living in sin, as soon as God gave me spiritual life, I was conscious that guilt lay heavily upon me; I am conscious now of pain removed, and so I am equally conscious of sin removed, and I do not hesitate to say it here, that my consciousness of pardoned sin is, at this moment, as clear and as distinct as my consciousness of removed pain, while I look at Jesus Christ, my Lord, by faith.

So is it often with the Christian. It is frequently with him a matter of consciousness most positive and infallible that he is truly and really cleansed from all sin by the blood of Jesus Christ; and it is not merely a matter of consciousness, but if you think of it, it is a matter of reasoning. If Jesus Christ did indeed take the sins of all who believe, then it follows, necessarily, that I, trusting in Christ, have no longer any sin—for if Christ took my sin—sin cannot be in two places at once. If Christ bears it, then I do not bear it; and if Christ was punished for it, then the punishment of my sin has been endured, and I cannot be punished for the sin for which Jesus has been punished—unless God should sovereignly punish men—which would be such an insult to the honesty and justice of God, that it must not be tolerated for a moment in our thoughts! If Jesus Christ has paid the debt, it is paid, and—

*“Justice can demand no more,
Christ has paid the dreadful score.”*

So the Christian’s being cleansed from sin becomes to him a matter of spiritual argument—he can see it clearly and manifestly.

Yet more, he is so certain of it that it begins to operate upon him in blessed effect. He is so sure that there is no sin laid to his door that he draws nearer to God than a sinner defiled with sin, may do. He enters into that which is within the veil—he talks with God as his Father; he claims familiar communion with the Most High God; and though God is so great that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, yet he believes that that same God lives in his heart as in a temple. Now, this he could not feel if he did not know that sin is put away. Beloved, no man is capable of virtue in the highest sense of the term till it is a matter of certainty to him that his sin is cleansed. You say, “That is a strong assertion,” but I do assert it—all of you who are doing good works with the view to saving yourselves are missing the mark of pure virtue. You say, “Why?” The goodness of an action depends upon its motive. Your motive is to save yourselves—that is selfish—your action is selfish, and the virtue of it has evaporated. But the Christian, when he performs good works, does not perform them with any view whatever of merit or self-salvation. “I am saved,” he says—“perfectly saved. I have not a sin in God’s Book against me—I am clean. Great God, before Your bar I am clean through Jesus Christ—

*‘Loved of my God, for Him again
With love intense I burn.’*

What can I do to prove to all mankind how much, how truly I love my God?” You see, then, that this must be a matter of certainty, or else it will never have its right effect upon you. And I pray God that you may suck the certainty out of this text and taste its sweetness to your own soul’s inward contentment, and be able to say, “Yes, without a doubt, the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.”

6. I hope I shall not weary you, but a few words upon the sixth gem which adorns the text, namely, the DIVINITY of it. “Where?” asks one. Does not divinity gleam in this text? Does it not strike you that the verse is written in a God-like style? The God-like style is very peculiar. You can tell the style of Milton from the style of Wordsworth, or the style of Byron. Read a verse, and an educated person knows the author by the ring of the sentences. The God-like style is unique in its excellence. You need never put the name at the bottom when the writing is of the Lord. You know it by the very style of it. “Light be! Light was.” Who speaks like that but Deity? Now, there is a divine ring about this sentence—“The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” Why, if *man* were talking of so great an atonement, he would fetch a compass; he would have to go round about. We cannot afford to say such great things as these in a few words; we must adopt some form of speech that would allow us to extol the truth and indicate its beauties. God seems to put away His pearls as if they were but common pebbles. “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin”—as if it were as much a matter of common work as for a man to wash his hands.

Notice the simplicity of the whole process. It does not seem to take weeks or months—it is done at once! Slowly and by degrees is man’s action—we must lay the thing to soak, to fetch the color from it,

subject it to many processes, and expose it to the wind, and rain, and frost, and sun before it can be cleansed. But here, God speaks and it is done. The blood comes into contact with the guilty conscience, and it is all over with sin. As if it were but a handful that moves a mountain of sin, He takes up the isles as a very little thing; He counts great oceans of our sin as though they were but a drop in a bucket. Believing in Christ in a moment, by the divine and majestic process which God has ordained, we get the perfect cleansing of sin.

7. In the last place, just a hint upon the WISDOM of the text. What a wise way of cleansing from sin the text speaks of! Beloved, suppose God had devised a plan for pardoning sin which did not turn the sinner's face to God; then you would have a very amazing spectacle; you would have a sinner pardoned by a process which enabled him to do without his God—and it strikes me he would be worse off than he was before. But here, before ever the sinner can receive pardon, he must say, "I will arise and go unto my Father." And he must come closer into contact with God than he ever came before. He must see God in the flesh of Christ, and must look to Him if he would be saved. I do bless God that I have not to turn my face to hell to get pardon, but I have to turn my face towards heaven; that seems to me to be the wise way, for while it takes away the sin which was like a disease, it takes away the distance from God which was the true root of that disease; it turns the sinner's face in the direction of holiness and bliss.

Observe the benefit of this plan of salvation in the fact that it makes the sinner feel the evil of sin. If we were pardoned in a way which did not involve pain to someone, we would say, "Oh, it is easy for God to forgive it." But when I see the streaming veins of Jesus, and mark the sweat of His blood fall to the ground, and hear Him cry, "They have pierced My hands and My feet," then I understand that sin is a dreadful evil. If a man could be pardoned without being made to feel that sin is bitter, I do not know that he would be really any the better off—perhaps better unpardoned than pardoned, unless he is led to hate sin.

Our gracious God has also chosen this plan of salvation with the wise design of making man glorify God. I cannot see sin pardoned by the substitutionary atonement of the Lord Jesus without dedicating myself to the praise and glory of the great God of redeeming love. It would be a pity if man could be pardoned, and afterwards could live a selfish, thankless life, would it not? If God had devised a scheme by which sin could be pardoned, and yet the sinner lives to himself, I do not know that the world or the man would be advantaged. But here are many birds killed with one stone, as the proverb puts it. Now therefore, at the foot of the cross, the bands which bound our soul to earth are loosened. We are strangers in the land, and therefore, "God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto us, and we are crucified to the world."

I leave this text with the believer, only adding, if any of you would have it, and joy in it, you must walk in the light of God. I pray God the Holy Spirit to bring you to see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; then you will trust Him, and then you shall have fellowship with Him, and by His blood you shall be cleansed from all sin. God bless you for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 John 1; 2:1-11.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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