

The Blotting Out of Sin

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Note: In this important article, Waggoner lays out the Bible truth that sin does not just consist of deeds, but it is an actual force in the spiritual nature, which is cleansed away by the gospel. Many decades later, this long-hid truth was resurrected and became a key teaching in the ministry of Fred Wright, who stated plainly, “sin is not what you do, but what you are.”

IT IS part of fallen human nature to make religion consist of forms and ceremonies, formulas and doctrines. Sacerdotalism is not peculiar to certain denominations; it is inherent in fallen human nature and just to the extent that one loses sight of God, that formalism will manifest itself even in those who are most sincere. There are just as sincere souls among those whose religion consists of forms as among any people on earth. I have seen among Roman Catholics as much devout sincerity as among any people.

Our danger lies in thinking that the truth consists of certain statements—of losing sight of the distinction between truth and the statement of truth. There is just as much difference between these two as there is between the law and the writing out of the law. The real law is living; the writing of it in the book is only a shadow. We are in danger of making a creed, and thinking that that is the truth.

No human words can express the truth of God.

1 Corinthians 2

⁹ Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love Him.

¹⁰ But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.

The fullness of the truth of God cannot be stated in human language; otherwise it could be heard by the ear. It cannot be framed in human thought; otherwise it could enter into the heart of man.

Truth can be revealed to man only by the gift of the Spirit of truth.

1 John 1

⁵ This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth;

⁷ 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.

Just forget the division of this epistle into chapters, with which John had nothing to do. This was a letter, containing but few sentences, not so long as we ourselves have sometimes written. At the beginning of the letter he makes this statement of what his message is, and a little later he writes about the end of the world.

1 John 2

¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

¹⁷ And the world passes away, and the lust thereof; but he that does the will of God abides forever.

This then is just the message for the last days, that which will make people stand when the world passes away. Then the Apostle speaks:

²⁷ But the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him.

No man can teach you the truth; the things which God has prepared are revealed, only by the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

²⁸ And now, little children abide in Him, that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

So this is the message that will give people boldness at the coming of the Lord, so, that they will look up and say,

Isaiah 25

⁹ Lo this is our God, we have waited for Him and He will save us.

This, then, is the message, that God is light, and if we walk in the light the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all,—blots out all iniquity. The proof of whether or not we have the truth is in the effect of that which we have, upon our lives. Does it cleanse us from unrighteousness? If we walk in the light, then the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us. Light is the flowing forth of God's life, which cleanses, and blots out sin.

We need to be on our guard against the idea that the blotting out of sin is merely as the passing of a sponge over a slate, or an entry in a ledger, to balance the account. This is not the blotting out of sin.

An ignorant man who saw a thermometer for the first time thought to lessen the heat by breaking it. But how much effect did this have upon the weather? Just as much as the wiping out of the record of his sin has upon the sinner. The tearing of a leaf out of a book, or even the burning of the book containing the record, does not blot out the sin.

The sin is not blotted out by blotting out the account of it, any more than throwing my Bible into the fire abolishes the Word of God. There was a time when all the Bibles that could be found were destroyed; but the Word of God—the truth—remained just the same, because truth is God himself; it is His life.

Truth is implanted in the heavens and earth, it fills the stars, and keeps them in their spaces; it is that by which the plants grow, and the birds build their nests; it is that by which they know how to find their way across the sea.

When Moses broke the tables of stone, the law was just as steadfast as it was before. Just so, though all the record of all our sin, even though written with the finger of God, were erased, the

sin would remain, because the sin is in us. Though the record of our sin were graven in the rock, and the rock should be ground to powder—even this would not blot out our sin.

The blotting out of sin is the erasing of it from the nature, the being of man. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. Our bodies are but the channel, the border, the sand upon the shore, of the cover of life. Impressions have been made upon us by sin.

At the seashore, when you see a smooth piece of sand, your first impulse is to make some mark on it, to write the characters upon it. Then the sea comes up, and each wave that passes over it helps to obliterate the impression until it is entirely blotted out. Even so the stream of life from the throne of God will wash away and blot out the impressions of sin upon us.

The erasing of sin is the blotting of it from our natures, so that we shall know it no more.

Hebrews 10

² ...the worshipers once purged [actually purged by the blood of Christ, have] ...no more conscience of sins.

...because the way of sin is gone from them. Their iniquity may be sought for, but it will not be found. It is for ever gone from them,—it is foreign to their new natures, and even though they may be able to recall the fact that they have committed certain sins, they have forgotten the sin itself—they do not think of doing it any more.

This is the work of Christ in the true sanctuary, which the Lord pitched, and not man, the sanctuary not made with hands, but brought into existence by the thought of God.