

And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more

by William MacDonald

Transcript

“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” (Heb. 10:17)

God’s ability to forget sins that have been covered by the blood of Christ is one of the most soul-satisfying truths in Scripture.

It is a great wonder when we read, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us” (Psa. 103:12). It is a marvel that we can say with Hezekiah, “Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back” (Isa. 38:17). It boggles the mind when we hear the Lord saying, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins” (Isa. 44:22). But it is even more wonderful when we read, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer. 31:34).

When we confess our sins, He not only forgives, He forgets instantly. We are not stretching the truth when we say that He immediately buries our sins in the sea of His forgetfulness. This is illustrated by the experience of a believer who was having a ding-dong struggle with a besetting sin. In a moment of weakness, he gave in to the temptation. Rushing into the presence of the Lord, he blurted out, “Lord, I’ve done it again.” Then he thought he heard the Lord saying, “What have you done again?” The point, of course, is that in that split second following confession, God had already forgotten.

This is a delightful paradox—that the omniscient God can forget. On the one hand He knows everything. He counts the stars and names each one. He numbers our tossings and keeps count of our tears. He marks the sparrow’s fall. He numbers the hairs of our head. And yet He forgets those sins that have been confessed and forsaken. David Seamands said, “I don’t know how divine omniscience can forget but I know it does.”

There is one final point! It has been well said that when God forgives and forgets, He puts up a sign reading “No fishing.” It is forbidden for me to fish up my own past sins or the sins of others that God has forgotten. In this respect we must have a poor memory and a good forgettery.

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