

Where have You Left Them ?



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“NO more violation of the Fourth Commandment for me!” said John Bunyan as he listened one day to a sermon against Sabbath-breaking. He would obey it henceforward with heart and soul, that he would! So when he got home he assured his wife that on this point his mind was thoroughly made up, once for all.

But, alas for human resolutions in natural strength! The impression was very transitory. Indeed, before he had well finished his dinner he had shaken the sermon out of his thoughts, and was mentally returning to the old sports. That very afternoon he might have been seen flinging himself with his usual vehemence, heart and soul into the game of “cat.”

Suddenly, he says, he thought he

heard a voice from Heaven! He considered for a moment, then threw his "cat" upon the ground and left off playing. It is said that the spot can be pointed out now where he stood like a statue, trembling at the demand of the superhuman voice, "*Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?*"

Now there is little doubt that at this solemn moment John Bunyan thought that to *leave* his sins—to leave off committing them—was all that was necessary for his soul's security and blessing. And, without question, thousands in this more enlightened day share that thought with him. If they could only leave off sinning for the future, they think their previous history, though full of sin, would practically be winked at by God, or, to say the least, mercifully passed over. So that, in reality, they would make REFORMATION their saviour. But that cannot be, for

"God requireth that which is past"

Eccles. 3:15. And though man may

say in his heart, "God hath forgotten : he hideth his face ; he will never see it," *He will "not require it"* Psa. 10 : 11, 13, yet God's demand is inevitable, absolutely inevitable ; for it is the demand of His own holy, righteous character. Sin *must* have its judgment. So that if John Bunyan's sinful course could have been effectually abandoned that afternoon on the village green, and never more resumed, it would still have left the sins of the past to be brought up against him at the day of judgment. "God requireth that which is *past*."

The sins of yesterday can no more be atoned for by the good deeds of to-day than one act of treason-felony last year could be wiped out by any number of loyal acts this year. The manufacture of a white pin to-day could not change the colour of a black pin manufactured yesterday ; nor would all the white pins made throughout a whole century alter the fact that one black had been produced in the previous century.

It is true that, when God's Spirit begins to work in a man's soul, one of

the first signs of it is that he as genuinely desires to give up his sins for the future as he earnestly craves forgiveness for the past. Hence the apostle Peter says, "God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you *from his iniquities*" Acts 3 : 26. Indeed, there would be grave doubt as to the existence of any genuine work in a man's soul if there was not, in more or less degree, this turning away *from* his iniquities. But there is a wide difference between being so indignant with your unjust living in the past, that you are determined to run no further into debt, and the just meeting of your past liabilities. And there is as vast a difference between turning from your iniquities, and having those iniquities righteously put away from you.

"Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
Naught for sin could e'er atone,
But Thy blood, and Thine alone."

"Though thou wash thee with nitre
and take thee much soap, yet *thine*

iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord," Jer. 2 : 22. Let man adopt the very best methods that lie within his reach, he cannot remove the stain of the smallest of his sins from before the eye of God. The end of all his reformation and religious zeal, with the help of all the clerical orders and sacerdotal performances under the sun, is simply this,

"Thine iniquity is marked

before ME, saith the Lord."

ONLY THE BLOOD OF *Jesus*, and THE BLOOD OF JESUS ONLY, can remove the crimson stain. The only place where sin can be left so that it will never more rise in judgment against me is at the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. The only way I can stand for ever clear of sin's awful consequences is by being "*justified by his blood*" Rom. 5 : 9.

Do you ask how it is that the believer is thus justified? Let Isaiah, by the Spirit of God, answer : He shall "justify

many ; *for he shall bear their iniquities*
Isa. 53 : 11.

On the ground of faith in that *one Sacrifice* once offered, God can now say of every believer, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more"
Heb. 10 : 17.

Just one serious word more. Are you content to say, My sins are now a thing of the past, I have left them all behind? Then

where have you left them?

Is your debt left in the creditor's book against you, or under the value of that which has cancelled it?

Are your sins only under the fair garment of a reformed life, or are they under the value of that which is the witness of the precious life of Another having been laid down on your account—the precious blood of Jesus? *Where have you left them?* Be sure of this, they are either marked by God's eye, or removed from God's memory.

Which? Do not, we beseech you,
rest another moment without a satis-
factory answer to that question—an
answer *good enough to die with.*

“What can wash away my stains?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus :
So that not one spot remains?
NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD OF JESUS.”

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