

Gus Nichols

THE CHRISTIAN'S SINS

A little child taking its first piano lesson would say, "I want to play perfectly," and will do its best. But the teacher says in her heart, "**He made an awful mess of it,**" but gives him a good grade—100 or an "A" or whatever the method of grading the student—because he did his best. God is not going to say at the judgment, "Well done, thou good and perfect servant. Thou hast been perfect over a few things, I'll make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joys of the Lord." If my Bible read like that, I'd want to cry forever! There would be no grace sufficient to save me and I don't think it would reach all of you either! But it is by the favor of God, his mercy and forgiving grace, that we are saved and kept saved and kept on the way to heaven. **If lightning were to strike you and you had not had time to pray since this morning, what about it? You would go to heaven because if you hate sin and hate the sinning business you are not willfully living in sin.** I'm living in obedience to God. It is my all-consuming and rainbow purpose and plan in life never to commit a single sin. That makes me a Christian. What about the practice of sin? **Like the little child, the practice is not up to the standard.** Thus, we grow into maturity and the life may never reach that standard of perfection. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin," that is, he does not practice sin or willfully sin. He is a changed man. He is a new creature. **But that does not mean that he is sinlessly perfect. It only means that he hates sin, his own sins; and is trying to get away from sin, and that he is no longer in rebellion against God.**

To Whom God Will Not Impute Sin

Little children do wrong. They violate the word of God just the same as adults. A little child, when he lies, does wrong. God would be displeased if you parents were to tell your children that it is right for them to lie, just because they are not accountable and responsible before God. What is the difference? God does not chalk their sins up against them. He does not chalk lying up against a child for it is not accountable and responsible. It is not able to do any better than it is doing. God does not chalk up stealing against a little child. But the very day that a youth becomes accountable before God, and responsible, God starts chalking up sin against him and then he is lost, and is a sinner before God. He will be eternally lost, just as anyone else, if he dies without obeying the gospel and without becoming a Christian. **But God does not chalk up sin against the faithful child of God. He keeps us justified. He keeps us pardoned and forgiven of our sins.** That is what Paul meant when he said in Romans 4:8, "Blessed is the man to whom God will not impute sin." The American Standard Version says, "to whom God will not reckon sin." **What does reckon mean? It means to count it, to chalk it up, to put it on the record against one.** "Blessed is the man to whom God will not impute sin." The Bible says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8.) **Everyone has sins, but he does not have to be a willful sinner.** He will have enough of them if he is sinning only through weakness and when doing the best he can to overcome sin and to obey God in all matters. **He will still have some sins, but if he is penitent and pure and clean in heart, in purpose of life, and is doing his best to be like Jesus, then God will keep him cleansed and that is the man to whom God will not impute, not reckon, not chalk up sin. It is encouraging to the Christian to know that he can live the Christian life in spite of his weaknesses, and mistakes.** If he is pure in heart, hates his sins and wants to live right, God will see him through. So I do not hesitate to tell the alcoholic that he can be a Christian. I do not hesitate to tell the thief and, the robber that he can become a Christian. I tell everybody that if he will obey the gospel, God will forgive him and save him, and will keep him cleansed so long as he is not willfully sinning, so long as he is pure in heart, he will see God. **And God will not chalk up his sins against him, because he is praying for**

continued forgiveness every time he prays. Not, I've sinned so many sins here in the last few moments, or in the last few days; but, **I want forgiveness for whatever sins I may commit while not in the sinning business.** That is what John means. (1 John 1:7, 8.) (Gus Nichols, *Lectures on the Holy Spirit*, pg. 34, 35).

