

Hebrews 10:26-27 (William T. Trotter) 78146

Words of Truth: Volume 8, If We Sin Willfully (10:26-27)

In seeking to understand the words of Holy Scripture, it is always helpful to bear in mind the general scope of the teaching of the particular book in which the words are found. And this is, perhaps, especially useful, and indeed necessary, in considering the Epistles in the New Testament. Some special circumstances or considerations led to the penning by the inspired apostles of each of them; and if a little simple and prayerful study is given to them, it is generally not difficult to gather, from the epistles themselves, the particular objects the Holy Spirit of God had in view in inditing them.

No two of them treat of exactly the same subjects, or from exactly the same point of view; and a careful comparison of the Epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews, will at once convince us that, not the latter, but the former, was intended to embody the precious instruction which is the more urgent need, of one seeking "Peace with God," whose conscience, awakened to a sense of guilt before God, craves to know what the provision is, which His grace has made for sinners as such; how He can be just, and the Justifier of the ungodly; and how the one who has learned himself to be hopelessly lost "without strength," a sinner by practice, as also an enemy by nature—how such an one can find salvation, justification, from God and before God, and peace.

To one who has thus learned to see himself or herself as God sees and speaks of us, the truth of Rom. 3; 4; 5, and 8, will prove of unspeakable preciousness. Showing, first, how the death of Christ avails for "redemption," the perfect canceling and blotting out of sins: how God can, upon the ground of that precious blood-shedding, "be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Next, that the resurrection of Christ was "for our justification;" for we see in it not only God putting His own seal upon the value, in His sight, of the work of the cross, but now He has taken our substitute out of the place where our sins had brought Him, and given Him a new place in resurrection, to be the Head of a new race; every one of whom, (and it is true of every one who, taking the place of "guilty before God," trusts in the mighty work of redemption accomplished solely by Christ—every one such believer) is reckoned by God to belong to the Head of the new race, that is the Lord Jesus, in righteousness and life; just the same as by our natural birth we are connected with "the first Adam," who fell himself, and involved every one of his posterity in condemnation and death.

The first Adam was turned out for his disobedience, and became the head of a fallen and guilty race: "the last Adam" (1 Cor. 15.) was taken in, after accomplishing an obedience "even unto death," and became the Head of a new race, every one of whom has "justification of life." He is looked at as "in Christ Jesus;" for him "there is now no condemnation." Not only is he not condemned, but there is none for him: he is "in Christ," shares with Him His new position before God as the "accepted man;" and to condemn him, would be the same as condemning Christ!

Now my dear unknown reader, you are at this moment represented before God by one of these two heads. "In Adam" or "in Christ." There is nothing between. You are either reckoned to be in the position of one or the other—that is, outside, through your own sin; or inside, through Christ's work, which puts away sin. It is really very simple, for it is God's way of presenting it. It is no matter of feeling, which will be never two days alike, but of God's free and unchangeable grace, in which He meets every and any poor sinner who finds out his true condition as lost and undone, and simply looks away from hateful, sinful self, to "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;" that great work, which is a "finished" work; declared so by the one who accomplished it (John 19:30); and the witness of God given to it in that He raised Him from the dead—that work which is as complete and perfect as it will be in eternity—back to which all the redeemed will look as that through which they were saved, and which is presented to you too today, that you may even now rest your whole soul's confidence upon it, and find "peace with God," as you simply rest in its perfect efficacy. Is it not that precious blood alone that cleanses from all sin? and has it not been shed long ago? If not of perfect value, it must remain imperfect forever! You cannot finish the work. But if it is finished, and enough for God against whom the sin was, is it not enough for you? and is it not enough today?

"Well," you say, "it seems simple—if I could lay hold of that, I should be happy, and while I thus forget myself, except to judge and loathe myself, as a guilty sinner before God, and think of the work of Christ on the cross, I think—I hope I am saved; but what about tomorrow? Shall I not perhaps, be just as miserable again then?"

Well, if your peace today is based upon anything whatever in yourself, your faith, or anything else, it may be gone and lost tomorrow; but if your eyes are turned to Christ today, to find in Him all you need, to fill your heart, and purge your conscience, the question is, will He be any different tomorrow? Will His blood have lost its precious efficacy, or He have changed because you have? If I have been wrecked, and been tossing about in the water, till despaired of life, and find myself now on a solid rock, I do not torture myself to find out whether I am standing firmly; but is the rock firm that I stand on? I tremble, for I very nearly escaped drowning; but the rock I have my feet on does not tremble, and so I fear not. And it is so as to salvation: my faith is weak and poor indeed, my feelings often worse; but He my Savior never changes, and "He is our peace." (Eph. 2) "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." (Isa. 26) The true way of peace is, not to be examining and dwelling upon our faith, but the grace of Him who is the object of that faith.

And now for a word or two about the verses in Heb. 10. This epistle is addressed to those who had been Jews, but who had believed in Jesus as their Messiah, and had come into persecution and trouble in consequence. They were thus in danger of "drawing back" from their confession of Christ, instead of holding fast the "beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end." The apostle warns them against this in a most solemn manner, and not only exhorts them to be faithful in the position they had taken up, to hold fast the confession of their hope without wavering, but also to take up a more decided place outside that Jewish system which had been set up and owned of God, but which was now disowned, and about to be abolished (until Israel's future restoration) by the destruction of their Temple, and Sanctuary, and City.

Before this comes, and they are compelled to give up the Judaism they clung to, He exhorts them by the Holy Ghost (or rather He by the writer) to "go forth" unto Christ "without the camp bearing his reproach." This comes at the end, but at the beginning, he aims to impart more true and exalted thoughts of their Messiah, whom they were in danger of despising and slipping away from.

In the first chapter He proves, from their own ancient testimonies, the divinity of Messiah, His personal glory as above angels—a wonderful and difficult thing for the Jew to seize. In the second, His glorious humanity is the subject, and the various reasons of His humiliation. Then, in what follows, His excellent superiority to all the types that pointed to Him is unfolded, and towards the end of chapter 9, His one sacrifice and once entering the true sanctuary is contrasted with the high priest's yearly action on the "day of atonement." Man has once dying before him, and then, divine judgment. Christ was once offered, and now we look not for death and judgment, or for the next atonement day, with a renewed sacrifice, but for the re-appearing of the One whose one offering has purged our conscience.

In chapter 10:18, after the witness of the Holy Ghost that sins are put away, the apostle says, this being the case, the sacrifice neither need be, nor can be repeated.

But what if, after a soul has come to "the knowledge of the truth" about this one all—availing sacrifice, he "willfully" turns his back upon it, and deliberately goes on in the "sin" the sacrifice was to put away?

We do not look for judgment, for it was borne by our substitute, and we look for Him to come again. But what does he look for who prefers the sin to the sacrifice which puts it away? There is but one sacrifice, and he turns his back on it— "treads underfoot the Son of God"—certainly there remains no more sacrifice for sins—Christ will not suffer again, because he (the sinner) will not have His first coming. Then, of course, his sin remains, and judgment must come. He is reckoned an "adversary," and must look for not another sacrifice, but "a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and heat of fire which shall devour the adversaries." Such seems to be the simple but solemn import of this passage. W. T.

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