Hebrews - Commentaries by Charles Stanley

Things New and Old: Volume 29, If We Sin Wilfully

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Hebrews 10:26

“For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

There is a similarity between these words, and—those we have considered in chapter 6. It is the impossibility of being restored to repentance by Jewish ordinances, of those who give up Christianity and go back to Judaism. This impossibility will be still more clear if we examine these words in chapter 10:26, &c. Only there is this difference, the apostle had now gone on to the perfect truth, as to eternal redemption by the one sacrifice of Christ. And when that is once known and understood, it becomes a self-evident fact, that to go back from that, to the Imperfection of the law, with all its imperfect sacrifices, makes restoration by those impossible.

There are four things in this scripture.

1. “For if we sin willfully.”

2. “After we have received the knowledge of the truth.”

3. “There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.”

4. “But a certain fearful looking for of judgment.”

1. Willful sin is an awful thing. In the law there was no provision for willful, or presumptuous, sin. If a man sinned through ignorance, he might bring his sin-offering, atonement was made for him, and he was forgiven. Not so he that did anything presumptuously, and despised the word of the Lord. “That soul shall be cut off from among his people.” (Num. 15:27-31.) How many of the true children of God go in mourning and darkness, fearing that they have sinned willfully, and they fear that there is therefore no hope. Now can a child of God sin willfully? Scripture would say, No! He that is born of God doth not practice sin—he is born of God, has a nature that cannot so sin. (See 1 John 3:8-10; 5:4, 18)

The sin of Judas was willful, presumptuous; the terrible sin of Peter was not willful. Judas intended, sought opportunity to betray Christ, he was the son of perdition. Peter, in the hour of human weakness, did the very thing he hated. He was a quickened soul, doubtless, born of God, but had not yet learned his own weakness. Even in. the case of an undelivered, though quickened, soul under law, it is not willful sin, far from it. “For that which I do, I allow not, for what I would, that do I not, but what I hate that do I,” &c. (Rom. 7:14-23.) This is a sad state to be in, but the truth must be learned. “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.” Until that lesson be learned, we do not accept Christ as our complete and eternal salvation. And the Spirit is given as the seal of eternal redemption through His blood. At present we will not say more on this head. The reader must know, though mourning over much in confession, whether his case is like that of Judas, or that of Peter. But let us now seek to discover the special point or sin intended in this scripture.

2. “After that we have received the knowledge of the truth.” Now “the truth” brought out in these two chapters is the perfect and abiding efficacy of the one offering of Christ, in contrast with the many sacrifices of the law. The law made nothing perfect or complete. All its sacrifices, and washings, and purifications, could not rend the veil, and open the way for the sinner to enter the presence of a holy God. It “could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to his conscience.” Now “the truth” is revealed, Christ has come, and “by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” Having once accomplished this, there was no need to offer Himself often.

In the end of those ages of Jewish sacrifices, He had appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself ONCE. In chapter 10 the infinite value of His ONE sacrifice is “the truth” fully contrasted with the many sacrifices which could never take away sins. There was the constant remembrance of sins every year, proving that as to the conscience, the question of sins between God and the worshippers had never been settled, and by the blood of bulls and goats could never be settled.

Now “the truth” is that by the one sacrifice of Christ that question has been eternally settled. It was not the will of God to leave man in the former unhappy state. God so loved us, that He could have no pleasure in those sacrifices which left sin still there: they only pointed forwards. Yea, as to the Trinity, “the truth” here revealed brings out three marvelous things: the will of God in eternity, written in the book, that the Son should come to satisfy God as to sin: “to do thy will, O God.”

Then, secondly, the Son came and did that perfectly, by the offering up of Himself. So that by these two thing, the will of God, through the offering up of the body of Jesus Christ once, we are sanctified, set apart to God. And thus the question of sin between us and God is settled forever. There is no uncertainty as to this. If He who came to do the will of God in this matter was still in the grave, there would be the greatest reason to doubt. “But this man, after he had offered ONE sacrifice for sins forever [or in continuity], sat down on the right hand of God.” So that while He sits there at the right hand of God, “the truth” is proved, and cannot be denied and more, this is the declared effect of His being there abidingly. “For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” This word translated “forever” which only occurs in Hebrews, means “abiding continuance,” so that the verse before us, in contrast with the many sacrifices which could never perfect the conscience, declares that Christ by one sacrifice of Himself has perfected the believer in abiding continuity.

Then in verse 15 we have the third thing, that the Holy Ghost is a witness to us. Thus the Trinity assures us that the question of all our sins is forever settled by the one offering of Christ. And this is the special blessed truth here spoken of. Oh, what a truth, the truth that the question of sins as between us and God is so settled. “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” If we know this, if we in our souls accept this, then it is most evident, as the word says, “Now where remission of these is there is no more offering for sin.” It must be so, since He came, according to the eternal will of God, took a body for the purpose, that He might put away our sins never to be remembered against us—to settle forever, by that one sacrifice for sins, the whole question of our sins, as between us and God. And He has done this, and in proof is seated at the right hand of God. Then the result is, as God declares, we are forever perfected; sins no more to be remembered against; boldness to enter His holy presence: every barrier forever removed. Glory be to God!

But mark, this one infinite sacrifice must set aside entirely all other sacrifices, which could never take away sins.

3. “There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.”

This is a self-evident fact, as we have already seen. That which is infinite and perfect must set aside all that is finite and imperfect. Is it not then sad that “the church,” so called, should have invented other sacrifices for the living and the dead? Sad beyond expression! but what will not man do when he turns away from the, word of God? Where “the church” flatly contradicts the word of God, let us hold to the word of God. He says, “There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.”

What is it then to sin willfully after receiving the knowledge of this special truth, as now made known to these people professing to be Christians, who are by birth Hebrews? It was plainly to forsake the assembling of themselves together as Christians. It was to go back willfully from the profession of the eternal efficacy of the one offering of Christ, and to go back to the offerings of Judaism. So that to those who did this, it was solemnly declared that there was nothing for them,

4. “But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” This is indeed most solemn, but it must be true. If those who despised Moses died without mercy, will it not be so, yea, “of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and bath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”

Surely all this was involved in giving up the one sacrifice of Christ, which had at least professedly sanctified them or separated them from Judaism, as a people called Christians; and now to go back to the murderers of Christ! And to despise the grace of God, which they had professed, and to go to those sacrifices which now had no value. For there now remained no more sacrifice for sins. Then it evidently followed there was nothing but judgment for them.

Now, reader, have you clone this? Have you willfully despised the one sacrifice for sins, and sinned willfully by going back to Judaism with its sacrifices? There is no question that this was the special warning in this scripture.

It may be asked; But do not Romanists and ritualists do this very thing in seeking salvation by sacraments and masses? is not this despising the one infinite sacrifice of Christ? No doubt it is, only there is this difference, they have never known “the truth” especially brought out in these chapters. They have been brought up in darkness, seeking salvation by works. They have no idea what being perfected forever by one offering means. Assuredly, if they despise the grace of God, they are lost. Yes, let every priest and clergyman know, and all others who may read these lines, that if lie does not accept Christ as the perfect and eternal salvation, he is lost. And without question, if he die refusing the only salvation of God, he will be lost for eternity. We earnestly entreat all such to search the scriptures. Think not of being saved by works, and pretended sacrifices for sins. God cannot be pleased with your works until you have accepted salvation through the blood of Christ. And then works will be acceptable, not to be saved, but because you are eternally saved. C. S.

Things New and Old: Volume 29, If They Shall Fall Away: Hebrews 6

We have had an earnest request to give a short exposition of this scripture, one which causes great perplexity to many; some taking the six things named in verses 1 and 2, as the six foundation truths, on which the church stands—especially “the doctrine of baptisms and laying on of hands,” which are supposed to mean Christian baptism, and modern confirmation; upon which the whole church is said to rest. This view is especially advocated in parish magazines.

Then, again, how many souls have been distressed, almost to despair, with the thought, that having sinned, it is impossible for them to be restored. “For it is impossible ... if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.” Terrible words when so understood. What can they mean? How can they be explained?

Now from either of these two points of view the inquiry is most deeply interesting and practical. Millions arc baptized and afterward confirmed; and are assured that by these ordinances they are brought into the church, become members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven: and this verse and these words are pointed out as the scriptural authority m which all this building rests.

Is it true, or a total misapplication of scripture? The eternal destiny of millions rests on the solution of this inquiry. It is all the more important because, if this gospel of ordinances be true, there can be no other.

Let us go into a parish where every person has been baptized, and confirmed. Every one, then, is regarded as born again by baptism, a member of Christ, a child of God, &c. Plainly you could not preach another gospel to such. If they are born again by water, they do not now need to hear the word, and be born again by the word, as of old. (See 1 Pet. 1:23; Jas. 1:18.) It would be difficult to conceive a more effectual way of setting aside the gospel, as preached by the apostles. Let us look the matter fairly in the face. We meet with a man cursing and swearing, and perhaps drunk: he has been made a child of God, we are told, by baptism, and confirmation. We are told he has fallen away by sin. Just here would come in the other difficulty—it is impossible to renew such to repentance.

But others, beside those who pervert this scripture to mean ordinances, as the foundation of the church, feel this difficulty. They have been truly converted, born of God, are the children of God. And they say, What if I sin, may, I have sinned: it is not with me as it was; I fear I have

fallen away, and the word says, “It is impossible... if they shall fall away to renew them again to repentance.” Can this be the meaning of this scripture? Would it not make the Christian’s position far worse than the Jews before Christ died? Undoubtedly, for he could have brought a bullock, or a goat, and have been restored by repentance and another offering; he could have laid his hands on its head, and through its death he would have been forgiven.

What then is the meaning of this scripture? You must notice, this Epistle was not addressee like others, to the church of God. It is the voice of God to the professing multitude of the Jews, just before the overthrow of the temple worship, and the destruction of both the temple and Jerusalem.

Further, notice that from chapter 5:12 to end of chapter 6 is a parenthesis: afterward the apostle returns to the subject of Melchisedec. The subject of the parenthesis is the state of the professing Hebrew Christians. He says, “Ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God.” They did not know which were the first elementary principles, that is, the measure of truth as known to the Jews before Christ, or the perfect and complete truths of Christianity, since Christ had come, died, and risen again. They were in exactly the same state as those writers in the parish magazines, who, having gone back to Judaism, do not know the difference between Judaism and Christianity. They have need that one teach them which be the first principles of the oracles of God. (Ver. 12.) What these clergymen build upon, the apostle says, we will leave if God permit. Is it not so? See chapter 6. “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ,” or, as in margin, “the word of the beginning of Christ,” “let us go on to perfection:” that is, to the complete truth of Christ. Let us leave Judaism, and go on to Christianity. Indeed the subject of the Epistle is the contrast between these two things. Thus the six things we are to leave, are distinctly that beginning or measure of truth the Jews had before Christ, “Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works.” In Judaism the building, to use the figure, never stood. The foundation had to be re-laid once a year. Indeed, as often as a man sinned, a foundation of repentance and sacrifice had to be re-laid. It was sinning and repenting. (See Eze. 18; Lev. 16) This Epistle shows the complete truth now is in direct contrast—that is eternal redemption: forever perfected the foundation is one sacrifice, which never can be repeated.

“And of faith toward God. Even the faith of Abraham and of all Old Testament saints, was toward God. That is, they believed the promise, and looked forward. Not so now, one infinite sacrifice has been offered; all now is accomplished, and, believing God, we are justified from all things. And He says, “And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”

“Of the doctrine of baptisms.” It is the same word that is translated “divers washings.” In chapter 9:10. Evidently this cannot be Christian baptism. For there is one baptism, not baptisms. Neither could the apostle say, we would leave Christian baptism. No, it simply means, leaving the typical washings of the law, very precious as the beginning of the word of Christ, but what were these as compared with, the blood of Christ which now cleanseth us from all sin?

“And of laying on of hands.” You will find if a man brought a burnt offering, or a sin offering to the Lord, he must lay’ his hand on its head. All these shadows had now served their purpose, and must be left. The one sacrifice of Christ is now the perfect truth and excludes all others.

“And of resurrection of the dead.” This was the measure of truth made known to the Jews before Christ. There would be a resurrection of the dead. This was known. (John 11:24.) The complete truth is “Through Jesus the resurrection from the dead” (Acts 4:2)—the blessedness of the first resurrection. From which the rest of the dead are excluded for a thousand years, and the coining of the Lord to take His own. Thus we leave the Jewish measure of truth and go on to the complete truth of Christianity.

“And of eternal judgment.” The Jews knew, the solemn truth of death and judgment, and that that was eternal. That is a most solemn truth; but if that were all, we should be in the same fear and bondage they were in. But whilst this is not denied for a moment by the Christian yet the complete truth is, “so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” (Heb. 9:28.) Now the minds of these Jewish teachers were all in confusion on these important distinctions, just like the writers of widespread parish magazines, Jesus says plainly to the believer that he shall not come into judgment. (John 5:24.) These writers do not believe Him, and look forward to the day of judgment, to fix their doom.

Now the apostle says, leaving these first principles of truth, we will go on to perfection, that is, to Christianity. “And this will we do if God permit.” (Ver. 3.) The word “for” connects what had gone before with what comes after. We must therefore keep up the contrast between Judaism and Christianity: all will then be simple. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened.... if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

Now what is this falling away from? It is a falling away from Christ, a giving up of Christianity, and going back to the many offerings, washings, and ordinances of the law. These were all right as shadows pointing forward. And no doubt the claims of antiquity were great: ordinances which had been appointed of God. No wonder the tendency was so strong to give-up Christianity, and go back to Judaism. Indeed, they had been practicing it, and, as James said (Acts 21:20), they were all zealous of the law. Hence the universal importance of going on from Judaism, to perfection, or Christ. Those sacrifices and washings had now lost all virtue, and could never renew them again unto repentance. It was impossible.

Let us mark the difference between “tasting” and “drinketh in” of verses 4 and 7. Jesus had foretold this in Matt. 13:18-23. This multitude of Jews had anon with joy received the tidings, that Jesus was the risen Lord and Christ. They had taken the place of disciples, in the light of Christianity. They had tasted of the heavenly gift; they may have even been the subjects of miraculous power of the Holy Ghost. Tasted the word of God, &c. But if all this was merely as wayside seed; or seed on thorny ground; and not having received the seed into prepared ground—and if, in times of trial, they (having no root) give up all profession of Christianity; and the eternal efficacy of the one sacrifice of Christ, and they go back to the many sacrifices of the law—on that ground, having finally apostatized from Christ, they are then where repentance is impossible, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. This shows that if we deliberately join any community we become guilty of their deeds. The Jews had rejected, trampled, so to speak, on the Son of God, whom they had crucified; to go back to them, was to become afresh deliberately guilty of their sins.

‘But how different the earth that drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it and bringeth forth, &c.’

Is it not so? One hears the gospel and says, I like that, but he merely tastes. Another, crushed with the sense of sin, with heart and conscience prepared for the word, says, That is what my soul has wanted for years, and he drinks in the word, as the prepared and thirsty land drinks in

the rain. Reader, which is your case?

Things New and Old: Volume 29, Offerings, Short Papers on the: No. 12

We will now turn to that epistle which more than any other explains the offerings. As no types could possibly set forth fully that which is perfect and infinite, we shall find from first to last, the instruction is mainly by contrast. God, has spoken to us in the Son: “Who being; the brightness of his glory, and the express image his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged, our sins [or made purification for sins] sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. This is surely in contrast, not only with Moses, Aaron, and an earthly priesthood, but He is before us in contrast to all angels, principalities; and powers. The Son is God speaking to us, the brightness of the essential glory of God, the effulgence of God. No creature can be compared to Him who made and upholdeth all things or creatures. He by Himself, with no help or creature—He made purification for sits, having once done this, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

How great the salvation then that flows from such an accomplished work—by such a Person!” We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man [or thing].” He has glorified God as to sin to the utmost; and God has straightway glorified Him. Could there be a greater proof that He has glorified God, and purged our sins, than to see Him seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high? Let us also remember that this great salvation was entirely His work, not ours. He combined, so to speak, everything in His own person, in bringing many sons unto glory. Everything in the law found its fulfillment in Him, though often in infinite contrast. He was as the Priest to offer the victim, yet He was the victim. He confessed our sins as His own. “A merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” (Chap. 2:17.) This must be the offering of Himself for sins, as He was not a priest after the order of Aaron, or of the tribe of Levi. This is fully opened up in chapter 7. “Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s for this he did once when he offered up himself.”

Can you say, He offered Himself for my sins? What did He actually offer up Himself for? Those very sins, you, if you are a believer, have committed during your whole life from beginning to end. Did He thus undertake for you? Were all your sins laid on Him, reckoned to Him? Have you ever fairly looked at this question? What love was this to you!

Those sins, yes, only one of them must have shut you out from the presence of God and light and holiness. Thousands of sacrifices for sins had been offered before. But for 1500 years man had been shut out by a veil: “The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest.” (Chap. 9:8.) But now the very one who offered Himself for the sins of the people, and if you are a believer for your sins, that very Man, is in the holiest in heaven itself. Not as a priest of the earthly tabernacle.

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Heb. 9:12.) He has entered as our Substitute, not by, or through the value of the blood of goats and calves, but according to the infinite value of His own blood, shed for us on the cross. By which He has surely obtained eternal redemption for us. When the atoning work on the cross was finished, yes, when He cried, “It is finished,” and bowed His head in death, them the veil was rent from top to bottom.

But have you entered into the meaning of that eternal redemption, which He obtained for us? What is redemption? It is not only being bought, a ransom paid, fully sufficient for the sin of the world. Redemption is something beyond It is the complete deliverance out of one state or condition, into another; as Israel after they were brought out of Egypt; and, as a slave when he is brought out of slavery into the state of liberty, his former master has no more claim; or as a prisoner redeemed from bondage, every link of his chains gone. Now to say all the world is redeemed from sin, and hell, and Satan, is to make redemption mean nothing: it is to destroy its meaning. Can all the world say, “We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins?” You know they cannot. Can you? If you are a believer you greatly dishonor Christ if you cannot say, He has obtained eternal redemption for me; Satan has no claim on me; not a sin remains on me—not a link on the chain. I am brought out of that bondage to sin and Satan, all sins being forgiven forever, forever. Brought out of darkness into light, and in that light forever. For such is the redemption that He has obtained for me. It was obtained for me when He died on the cross. It is possessed the moment the sinner believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. God said, “When I see the blood I will pass over.” The blood on the throne, yes, Jesus Himself on the throne, is the proof that God will remember our sins no more.

What about your conscience? In contrast with the blood of bulls and goats purifying the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead. works to Serve the living God?” Now what is it to have a purged conscience? Nay, first, What is conscience? Is it not the sense, or knowledge, that because of what you have done against another, that person has this thing against you? I know the sins I have done, and God knows them even far better than I know them; and if He has one sin on His mind against me, my conscience is bad and not purged. But here is a marvelous thing. God has so loved me, as to give His only begotten Son to take the full responsibility of all my sins. And He the Son has done it. And this was not only to cleanse me, by His blood from all sin, but also to purge my conscience, to remove every trace of fear or thought, that God has, or ever can have, one single thing against me. There is nothing but love, unhindered love.

Do you say, This may be very true as to all sins before conversion but my trouble is about sins since I had redemption? Stay, you forget the redemption Christ has obtained is eternal. And just here comes in that wondrous fact, that all the sacrifices of Leviticus were for a people, God’s people, who had been redeemed; who had sung the song of redemption in Exod. 15. Yes, even the day of atonement was appointed after the sin of the sons of Aaron. So that, what God is teaching us here in these references to those sacrifices, really meets the whole question of our sins, whether before or after we were brought to Him.

Quite true the offerings of the law could never do this; but do not say the one offering or sacrifice of Christ could not do this. For this He came; for this He died; for this He offered Himself, through the eternal Spirit. “How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” Do you say, My sins are so great, so aggravated, I cannot feel sure that God who knows all, has nothing against me, and will never remember my sins any more? Then you do not believe that Christ did the work He came to accomplish. Do you say, It is past all human apprehension, or conception, that a vile sinner, or still worse a, failing believer, should be brought to know with certainty

not only that his sins are forgiven, but that God can never impute sin unto him—never more have anything against him? Surely if should sin, would not God have that sin against him? If He have, in what particular would the death of Jesus be superior to the death, or blood of a goat? Would He not have to suffer and die again? And this cannot be. There remaineth no more offering for sin, it is at our eternal peril if we reject the infinite value and efficacy of the blood of Jesus. And, oh think of the blessedness of those who believe God, who have entered the holiest in perfect peace, assured that God can never have one thing against them. This is a purged conscience. For this our Jesus offered Himself. And He has entered heaven to appear before the face of God for us in proof that our sins, once laid on Him, are gone to be remembered no more. So that whilst He is there, our consciences are perfectly cleansed, or purged. We are in the light as He is in the light, and His blood cleanses us from all sin. There is nothing in the heart of God towards us but perfect love.

Do you say, I dare not accept this; it would lead to utter neglect of the service of God? Why, friend, you are mistaken, not God. This very purging of the conscience from dead works is to serve the living God." Yes, depend upon this, until your conscience is thus purged, or until you do thus believe God, all your works are dead works of unbelief. And if you are even a Christian, and do not know this blessed truth, that God can have nothing against you, you have no power for real service to God. You say, How can this be, since I see so much failure, sad failure even since I was, I trust, converted? And you look at yourself until you are dumb, yes, a dumb Christian, just as Zacharias was a dumb priest, whilst he doubted the word of Gabriel, the angel of God. He said "whereby shall I know this?" What a question, when God had sent him word it should be so. On this very account he was dumb. Why are there so many dumb Christians? Simply because there are so many deaf ones who refuse to hear the word that God hath sent to them. You are in company; not a word for Christ dare you speak. Why? Because you have not fully believed what God has said about a purged conscience.

Is this truth beginning to dawn upon you? You will be like Zacharias when he had called for a writing table and said "his name is John." Can you just sit down now and say, "his name is Jesus?" Can you bless God that He has purged your conscience from all sins forever? perfected your conscience forever? Oh, you will be no longer dumb, but ever ready to sing and make known how God sent His beloved Son "to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God: whereby the day-spring [or sun-risings from on high hath visited us." We, on the north part of the earth, scarce know what the sudden dayspring or sunrise is in the east. It is just like that when the full value of the blood of Christ bursts upon us. We would ask a wide question: How is it there is so little power and liberty to make: known the great salvation to others? Is it not because the blessed truth of a purged conscience is so little enjoyed? Is not all service, apart from this, mere unbelief?

We have dwelt rather at length on this question of a purged conscience, because of its vast importance in every way; and also that it is so much overlooked. And also because it Is the great need of thousands; yes, the need °Teat numbers of those who are Christians. We shall find the subject still continued in chapter Yes, God knows its deep importance to your and mine; and therefore in pure love He gives us still further explanation. What a theme the question of our sins, past, present, and future, should there be any in future, all settled by the blood of Jesus, so that the conscience is purged. No charge will God ever bring; all peace, everlasting, perfect peace. Is there peace with you? Then sit down and write "NAME IS JESUS."

Things New and Old: Volume 31, Everlasting Punishment

Yes, everlasting punishment is indeed "an awful affair," and many are trying to disbelieve it. But does that alter the fact? When Noah preached the coming flood of universal destruction, someone might have said, "What an awful affair," but who believed him? But did that alter the fact? And when God announced the destruction of Sodom, that was an awful affair. Lot himself scarcely believed it. But it came.

A guilty murderer is taken: he is guilty; he is condemned to death. He may think of the last hour, the ghastly preparations, the last walk to the scaffold and.... stop, he may say that is an awful affair. Oh, he may say, "I won't believe it. Her Majesty the Queen is too kind to allow me to come to that." But every moment brings him nearer to that dread reality.

But you may say, "Think how many learned men are denying eternal punishment, and maintain that the soul is not immortal." Were there not many mighty men, men of renown, all of whom rejected the preaching of Noah, or the warning of God? (Gen. 6:4.) Have you weighed the alternative? If you say that the soul of man is not immortal; that is, that man ceases to exist at death; then you must give up the whole word of God as false, and thus be left in outer darkness even now. You must take your place with the Know Nothings and Darwinians. You say, "Surely this cannot be true! Let us see. If man was not created with an immortal soul, that is, to exist forever, what was he? Simply a slightly superior beast. Here a little while, and then off the scene. Now there is no sin in a beast; there is no conscience of sin in a mere animal. There is no responsibility toward God in an animal. There would be no need for, or sense in, an atonement. An animal has no nature, no capacity to know God or the things of God.

But in contrast with the formation of all mere cattle, beasts, birds, or fishes, we read, "God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Here was a totally different creature from the beasts and cattle of the field. Here was a living soul, capable of conversing with God, and was placed both as head of creation, and under responsibility. And mark, whilst a beast could not be so placed, man was so placed as a living soul, and one sin has involved the whole race in ruin and misery. And what we read in the word of God we find around us today. There is the same distinction between man and the animals around, as there was when he came out of the hands of God. Not another creature is there on earth to which you can communicate the idea of God, or a future existence. Take away man's immortality, reduce him to a mere beast, though a superior beast, and then we must allow you overthrow everything revealed in the word of God.

That man as to his bodily existence is mortal, liable to death, like the beasts, is clearly revealed, but that is not our question. And that the Old Testament is chiefly occupied with the body and the things of the body, we do not dispute for a moment. That the word soul is used to denote man in the body, or persons, as we say, is frequently the case,—as "The soul that sinneth shall die." The person under the government of God would be put to death. The context will make this plain.

But now we have the complete revelation of God in the New Testament. What is the certain teaching of the complete word of God? Is there such a thought as that at death man, like the beast, ceases to exist? Far from it. Is there then distinct teaching that as to the wicked, rejecters of the gospel, they do not cease to exist at death? Could anything be more certain than the following? “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” (Heb. 9:27.) Can there be judgment after ceasing to exist? If man ceases to exist, there is nothing to judge. You may say, They will be raised again to be judged. True, they will, the word says so. (Rev. 20:11-15.) And they are cast into the lake of fire; and they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. Now that torment is declared to be forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night. (See Rev. 14:10, 11.) Now honestly, is this ceasing to exist at death? Infidels may teach so, but not the word of God. And that word never contradicts itself.

Does the Lord Jesus teach that going into hell fire is ceasing to exist? No, over and over again He declares it is fire that never shall be quenched. (Read Mark 9:43-48.)

Did He teach that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ceased to exist? No. “For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.” (Luke 20:38.) It may be objected that they were saved men, and therefore existed after death. Now as to this the Lord makes no difference whatever: He teaches that both the saved and lost live after death as to the soul; and that they are equally conscious as if they were alive in the body.

The rich man died; and in hell did he cease to exist? Not a bit more than Abraham. He lifted up his eyes, being in torments. Did he cease to exist? Oh hear his dreadful cry for a drop of water to cool his tongue. Oh reader, will this ever be your case? You say, That is only a figure. But a figure of what? If death is ceasing to exist, then it was a figure for the very purpose of deception. Yes, if you embrace this doctrine of demons, that death is ceasing to exist, you make the Holy Son of God a deceiver. The rich man no more ceased to exist at death than Lazarus the saved beggar. The one was comforted and the other tormented. Say that you deny the scripture, then we understand you. But do not pretend to be a Christian, and all the while teach doctrines that would make Christ a deceiver.

He is the truth, and could teach only the truth. In the plainest possible language He tells us, “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment [or torment]: but the righteous into life everlasting.” (Matt. 25:46.) He uses the same word to denote the everlasting existence of both. Many may not be aware how Satan is leading them on into this debasing error that man is not an immortal soul and will not exist forever and ever. But it is a direct attack on Christ, as a deceiver, and an attempt to overthrow all scripture. Prove it false in one part, and all true faith is destroyed in every other part. It must lead practically to infidelity on every subject. Already its dire effects are seen.

The progress of darkness and lawlessness has set in and advances with rapid strides.

No one can deny that, wherever this doctrine of non-eternity of torment has got a footing, reasoning and doubt on all scripture truths is following. Let us pause. Abundance of scripture might be brought to show that death is not ceasing to exist. How could the soul of the dead child have returned into it, if it had ceased to exist? yet it was dead and was restored to life. (2 Kings 4:32-36.) And so of the son of the widow of Nain. (Luke 7) There was a dead man. Yet at the word of Jesus the dead arose, sat up, and began to speak. No, beloved reader, if we give up the immortality of the soul we give up everything, and reduce man to a mere beast. There is no real sin, and no need of true expiation, if man, before the new birth, is a mere intelligent beast, has the soul of a beast or mere animal, and when he dies he ceases to exist. Is it not astonishing that man can shut his eyes to the scriptures as the revelation of God and become so dark?

Oh, young men, shun these, damning doctrines with horror. Crafty men will pervert the scriptures to deceive you. You may secretly wish it to be so, that you may indulge in sin, and see no judgment before you. But remember these solemn words, “It is appointed to men once to die, but after this the judgment.” “Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.” “So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.” “For we must all appear (or be made manifest) before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men.” “And I saw the dead small and great stand before God: and the books were opened.... and they were judged every man according to their works.” “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers [called now Spiritualists], and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

All this would be utterly false if the wicked ceased to exist at death. We cease to exist here in this state as to the body; but if the soul ceases to exist what is there to be judged? How can there be a second death of that which does not exist? Be warned in time. Let God be true, though every man be a liar. We repeat, if you give up the immortality of the soul, you give up the whole Bible. If we own the mortality of the body and the immortality of the soul, and the future resurrection, and judgment of all rejecters of the glad tidings of God, then all is clear. You and I must be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, either justified from all things through the death and resurrection of the very One before whom we are manifested: or we must be judged for our sins. And if thus judged, be cast into the lake of fire—into torment that never ends.

Oh think of the terror of that day. Think of the wrath of God: forever and ever. And think of God now, with arms of mercy ready to receive and pardon the vilest that comes to Him, that believes Him. Surely God has shown His estimate of sin by the death of Christ, His only begotten Son. Yes, God so loved., Will you reject His love? Will you reject His pardon freely proclaimed through Jesus? C. S.

Pamphlets, Hebrews 10

There are two things in the end of Hebrews 10: “Once in the end of the world hath He appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” It is not actually put away yet. “If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” Sin is also still in the world. But faith is assured that at the end of all trial of man, Christ appeared for that very purpose to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The work is accomplished, and the result of that one sacrifice will surely follow in its time. Blessed prospect, when we shall see Him and be like Him, sinless as He is pure. And how bright the prospect, when the new heavens and new earth shall appear!

Then there is also this fact, “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.” What a pillow, weary soul, is this to rest upon! Do you believe God? Then instead of looking for death and

judgment, the just due of the human race, you can look for Him who was offered to bear your sins; and He has so borne them, that He is about to appear, and not a question of sin can be raised. He has passed through the awful wrath and judgment due to us, and now He assures us that we shall not come into it. He will come and receive us to Himself in infinite love, “without sin unto salvation.”

Chapter 10. We now turn to the contrast of the many offerings of the law — what they could not do, and to what the one sacrifice of Christ can do, and does do. As we have seen, the offerings of the law being finite, could not possibly express the full infinite value of the one sacrifice of Christ. They were offered year by year, but could never make the Jewish worshipers perfect. If perfect they could have had no more conscience of sins. They never could get a perfect clearance of sins. There was a remembrance of sins every year. The very remembrance of sins was a proof, that the question of sins was not settled. It was never intended that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. They were shadows or figures. And such was the love of God to us, that He could have no pleasure in those sacrifices, which could not bring the objects of His love into His presence without sin: He would have them in the perfect enjoyment of His unhindered love.

Is it not now very blessed to hear the eternal Son speak? “Then said I, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.” Dwell on this. He knew the will of God: He came to do it. This is altogether a new thing. “He taketh away the first that He may establish the second.” The system of the law must be entirely set aside, and an entirely new order of things introduced and established. And this is the will of God, not man’s will. The whole new order of things must be according to His will. All is now of God. The various offerings of the law had served their purpose to point forwards, and now are set aside. Jesus could say (in the volume of the book it is written of me), “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.”

Now what was the will of God? Is it not revealed in what follows, that we should be sanctified, separated unto God, by the offering of the body of Christ? “By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once.” Note, it was not the will of God to set up another system of many offerings, or masses, but one offering, offered once. It is then a great foundation truth, a fact, that through the one offering of Christ, once offered, we ARE sanctified. Do you believe God as to this? or do you say, No, that one offering is not enough to separate me forever to God? Beware of unbelief as to this.

Further, note this distinct statement of inspired scripture: “And every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.” This is a universal truth, whether applied to the Jewish priests of old, or to those who take the place of Jewish priests now. Every such priest, and all who trust in his repeated daily sacrifices for sins, must own, to his inmost sorrow, that all such sacrifices can never take away sins; and hence, there is no peace with, or joy in God.

But now let us turn to Christ and His once offering of Himself. As it is written, “But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God.” It is not that He sat down, and then if one of His people should sin, He has to get up, and offer Himself again. No, by one offering He has cleared His people of their sins forever, in the sense of continuously. Thus our eyes are taken off ourselves. The Lord Jesus, who was delivered for our iniquities, who bore the whole wrath of God due to our sins, who was made sin for us, and once offered to bear the sins of many, who undertook the whole question of our sins — where is He? Seated, the very expression of the work being forever finished, continuously, on the right hand of God. And since all our sins were future, when He bare them in His own body on the cross once, He must have perfectly cleared all away from the sight of God, or His work would not be finished, neither could He sit down in the light and glory of God.

What then is the effect for us of His one offering? Let us hear: “For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” “Forever” is the same word in the original as in verse 12. Oh, let us ponder over these wondrous words. What has Christ done for you, my fellow believer, by His one sacrifice? Perfected you as to the conscience in unchanging continuance. It is not that you are as yet perfect as to the redemption and change of the body (Rom. 8:23). You are still “waiting for the adoption, the redemption of the body.” You are waiting for the resurrection from the dead. In that sense you are not perfected (Phil. 3:11, 12). You are not yet perfected in sinless purity like Christ, but when He appears you will be (1 John 3:2). “When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see him as He is.” Oh, blessed hope! We are not perfect in the sense of sin being eradicated from us: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). On all these points the scripture is clear enough.

Neither are we perfect in the sense of no weakness, or no liability or possibility, of sin or failure. No, “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins,” etc. (1 John 2:1). Thus there is a liability recognized of “any man” sinning, as we all know by sad experience; and yet there is the most blessed provision and the relationship to the Father maintained. Only note, there is no contradiction in scripture. The provision here, in case a believer should sin, is not a fresh offering for the sin. But it is Jesus Christ the righteous. He is still our unchanging righteousness. He is our Advocate, and He is the propitiation for our sins. And here beware of every shade of unsound doctrine, as though He had to make atonement, or has to make atonement or propitiation in heaven after His death on the cross, and consequently not by death, or suffering divine wrath. No, all this is sad error, and denies the true character of atonement finished on the cross. Just as the blood was brought into the holiest, and sprinkled on the golden mercy-seat, so the infinite value of the blood of Christ is ever continuously before God. The value of that precious blood ever maintains the righteousness of God, for the sin that is confessed to the Father was borne by Christ on the cross.

In what sense then are we perfected in unchanging continuity? In this sense, that there is not a single charge against us. The way is opened for us into the holiest in perfect peace with God. We are there according to the value God sees in the one offering of Christ: and that is infinite. Everything that once shut us out of His holy, holy presence is cleared forever away. This was the eternal will of God, thus to bring us to Himself. For this He sent His Son. To accomplish this He gave Him a body. Far more indeed, though not the subject of this epistle, did God purpose, and it is now accomplished, even to bring us into favor in the Beloved!

Here in Hebrews, it is the question of the conscience: and by the one offering of Christ the believer has no more conscience of sins. The Holy Spirit is a witness that God has nothing now against the believer, as He says, “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” Oh, the holy boldness, or liberty we have to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Now the one question is, Do we believe God? You must admit that it is altogether of God. Do not send out the spies of unbelieving reason, to see if it is so. Do not look within to see if it is so. The Holy Spirit bears witness that He who died on the cross, as the sacrifice for your sins, has perfected us forever -in unchanging continuance. Christendom does not believe the Holy Spirit. All her printed prayers show that men do not believe this wondrous grace of God. Ever using vain repetitions for God to be merciful, when He declares in the plainest words of all believers, “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more!” If you believe God, you must have done with masses and vain repetitions. It is a serious thing to say, We are Jews, when we are not; to set up an

earthly priesthood again, and to repeat prayers only suited for a Jew before Christ died.

If Christ by His one sacrifice has settled the whole question of our sins, perfectly or completely to the glory of God, then plainly there is no more offering for sin. To offer sacrifices now for the sins of the living and the dead, is the most distinct denial of Christianity, be this by whom it may. But if while protesting against such a human priesthood and vain unscriptural sacrifices, in the pretended offering up of Christ on human devised altars, we ourselves disbelieve the testimony of God to the one sacrifice of Christ, what better off are we than they?

Do you then believe God? Is Jesus the fulfillment of all the sacrifices of the law? And infinitely more. Let us go up (from) the picture gallery in Leviticus to God. Is He your sin-offering once delivered for your offenses, so that with the hand of faith laid on Christ, you can say, He has died for me; God has not now one sin against me? Is He your peace or communion-offering? Have you now communion with the Father and the Son, in the light that reveals all sin cleansed by His precious blood? Is He your meat-offering? Is the living Person of Jesus, as seen in the gospels, the food of your soul? Is He your burnt-offering, accepted in all that He in the sweet savor of His Person and offering is to God? If so, you will not be filled with doubts and fears, but praise and worship. O God our Father, grant this may be so with every child of Thine who should read these lines, for Thy beloved Son’s sake. Amen.

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