Mark - Commentaries by John Thomas Mawson

Answers to Correspondents, Sin Which Hath Never Forgiveness

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“An enquirer.” — “But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: because they said, He hath an unclean spirit” (Mark 3:29, 30).

If this passage is read with the parallel passage in Matthew 12, it will be seen that the Lord had just healed one possessed of a devil, blind and dumb. The people were amazed and said “Is not this the Son of David” but the Pharisees said “This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.” This was the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit which hath never forgiveness, as Mark 3:30 distinctly states.

The occasion was unique. The Son of God, who was Israel’s Messiah, was there in the midst of the people, and through Him the grace of God was displayed in delivering power. His mighty works were the witness to them as to who He was, and for the moment the people confessed Him, but the Pharisees, seeing His works, willfully and deliberately charged Him with being in league with Beelzebub. This was no passing thought, causing them poignant grief afterward, but their deliberate verdict after having weighed the evidence; and it proved the intensity of their hatred of Him. There was no mixture of the failure of the sinful creature in anything that the Lord did: in Him everything was absolutely perfect, and altogether of God; and yet they attributed that which was altogether of God, the manifest working of the Spirit of God, to the Devil; and that which was purely good they called unmixed evil. There was no other test for them: their doom was sealed by their own attitude towards the only One who could have saved them; and they manifested in this way an utterly reprobate state that would not bow to receive forgiveness.

Strictly speaking the commission of such a sin is impossible today, though the deliberate and final choice of evil in the known presence of good entails now, as always, consequences which are eternal and irrevocable. It was by words, not acts or thoughts, this sin was committed: certainly those of whom “Enquirer” writes “into whose minds blasphemous, thoughts have entered, unbidden and hated” have not committed it: their very grief because of these thoughts, which they hate, and which are attacks of the evil one, are proof of this. Let all such be assured that the grace of God is free and boundless. He will eternally forgive all who turn to Him in repentance. The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin (1 John 1:7).

Scripture Truth: Volume 1, Much-Maligned Coin, A

Contributed

“And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living” (Mark 12:41-44).

How often one has heard of a fat hand drawing out of a well-lined purse a small piece of silver in response to some request for help, and a voice saying in easy complacent tones, “I cannot give as much as I should like, but I can give the widow’s mite.”

The Bible never speaks of “the widow’s mite.” Anyone who talks of “the widow’s mite” misses the point of the Lord’s commendation of her action altogether. The Bible speaks of “the widow’s mites.” Don’t forget there were two of them, and they went together, and are never spoken of separately.

Suppose a Christian has £10,000. He gives a guinea for some object, and calls it “the widow’s mite.” But the Lord measured the widow’s action not by what she gave, but by what she had left. A Christian, who gives a guinea and had £10,000 to start with, is not perceptibly the poorer by his offering. The widow gave her all, and “the widow’s mites” in his case would mean £ 10,000.

I confess the widow puts me utterly to shame. Her faith and devotedness were sublime. No wonder her action is recounted by none less a teller of the tale than the Lord Jesus Christ, and twice recorded by God the Holy Spirit.

I could not have the meanness and hypocrisy ever to say that I gave “the widow’s mite,” let alone the unscripturalness of the expression.

If I had naught but a farthing in my pocket, and wanted to put something into the collecting box, I should have to put the farthing into the box, or nothing at all, for a farthing in this country is the smallest coin and is not divisible. But in the widow’s case her farthing was not only divisible, but actually lay in her hand in the form of two mites.

She was generous indeed if she had given “the widow’s mite” — half her possessions, fifty per cent of her property. She had the choice and she took it — she gave them both — she gave her all.

The Lord of life and glory sat over against the treasury. The rich came and threw in much and had much left for themselves. The widow came — the strong arm that had once supported her was gone: she had none but Jehovah to look to, but she knew that He was sufficient — and she threw in all her living.

Those two mites were morally weighty. Adjust the scales; place on one side all the gold and silver of the rich; pile up their offerings. Place on the other scale those two small coins. They are pathetic in their smallness; they won't do much for the upkeep of the gorgeous temple. The piled up gold and silver look comfortable and powerful.

But let the Lord lift the scales. See! the mites weigh heavy, and the gold and silver are light. Hear the verdict: "This poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury." How was that? The gold and silver were little more than gold and silver. The two mites had added to them the consuming devotedness of a heart caring only for God's glory. Hence their moral weight.

We plead not for money, but for devotedness. Were there more devotedness there would be no lack of anything. The Lord's interests would not languish.

It is not for nothing that we have the twice recorded story of the poor widow and her two mites.

Most Christians spend pounds over their own pleasure, and pence over God's interests. And yet the Savior gave HIS All.

Have you ever noticed the setting of that well-known verse, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). It comes in as a great surprise. The apostle Paul is anxious that the Corinthian believers, living in Corinth, a city of opulence, ease, and wealth, with all their enervating influence, should not be behind the Macedonian churches, who, "in a great trial of affliction," out of "the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." In verse 9 he lifts the whole question of giving on to an extraordinarily high platform by appealing to their affections, and reminding them of the grace of Christ, who, rich far beyond all mere creature wealth, became poor, that we through His poverty might be eternally rich.

What an example to move our hearts! May His devotedness to God and to us stir up an answering devotedness to Him. "The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord."

Only a few months ago was this illustrated beautifully by a lady in Scotland. She sent an offering for the Lord's work consisting of two rings, two gold rings, two chains, a chain and pendant, a chain and locket, eleven brooches, a pair of tortoise shell earrings, a single earring, two pins and an ornament. When sending them she described them. "as a few remnants of the old leaven for the blessed Lord Jesus Christ."

What made her do this? One can read between the lines of her simple description. The warmth with which she called the Lord "blessed," and the way she reverently and lovingly gave Him His full title bespoke a heart won, captured, devoted. She described the jewelry, once used for decking her person and drawing attention to herself, as "old leaven," showing she had judged superfluity of finery was not becoming to a Christian, and she made friends with "the mammon of unrighteousness" in a very happy and practical way.

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