



THE UNFORGIVEN SIN A. S. Copley

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." (Hebrews 6:4-6)

Multitudes have been greatly confused over these Scriptures. It becomes our happy task to explain this difficult passage which is not so difficult, when it is rightly read. Hebrews 10:26-29 should also be considered with it.

First, bear in mind that this epistle was written to Hebrews, or Jewish Christians, to set before them the redemption of Jesus Christ by means of the Tabernacle and its priestly service in the wilderness. Observe two very important pronouns in this sixth chapter: "those" (Verse 4) and "you" (Verse 9). Paul writes concerning the first, but to the second. These two classes are as distinct from each other as can be. Ponder and see these facts clearly, and you have the key to the problem.

Second, remember that the Jews as a nation rejected Christ and the Holy Spirit, by turning down the ministry of the apostles after the Spirit was given. The Jews "were once enlightened, and tasted the heavenly Gift," (Christ), under Jesus' own ministry. They "were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good Word of God and the dynamics of the age to come," during the preaching of the apostles on and after Pentecost. They were made to know that the types and shadows of their Messiah, promised in their own Scriptures, were now fulfilled in Jesus Christ, that He was indeed the Messiah, and hence, that there was no more need of slaying bulls and goats. The only real sacrifice that could take away sins had now been offered. Acts 4:7-14 shows that they were overwhelmingly convinced that Jesus is the Anointed of God. When they saw the power and boldness of the apostles and the miracles, they "marveled, and could say nothing against it." Were they not thus enlightened? Did they not taste of the heavenly Gift and of the good Word of God? Did they not partake of the Holy Spirit for He was poured out on all flesh.

Observe the language of Verse One: "Having left the word of the beginning of the Anointed One, we should go on to full growth, not again laying a foundation for repentance from dead works and for faith in God." The truth taught in the four Gospels was "the principles of the doctrine of Christ." His substitutionary



death was the all-sufficient foundation for the six essential things mentioned in Verse One. For Israel to continue offering the Levitical sacrifices was equivalent to laying again a foundation for repentance, faith, etc. And more, the apostle exhorts to progress, giving as a conclusive reason, verses 4 - 8, having given other arguments in Chapter 5:11-14. He would not have them to imitate in any sense, those who "sin willfully," or willfully reject the Messiahship of Jesus Christ.

But the Jews rejected all that light. They turned down the Word and resisted the Spirit (Acts 7:51). They went on with their typical sacrifices, offering birds, bullocks and goats, by which they virtually said that their Messiah had not come; that Christ had not died for their sins. Such rejection was "sinning willfully," Chapter 10:26. For such people, it was "impossible to renew them unto repentance." They "crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, exposing Him to public shame." By their conduct they said that He must be crucified again. Of course for such rejectors, "there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sin." They turned away from Him who "tasted death for every man," Jew and Gentile (Hebrews 2:9), and who "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9:26). They have "trodden under foot the Son of God and have counted the blood of the covenant (that is, the blood of Christ), an unholy thing, and have insulted the Spirit of Grace" (Hebrews 10:29).

If these quotations referred to common backsliding, then backsliders could never again repent and be forgiven. Disobedience to God, because of discouragement, or because of being overcome, is not willful sin. Stubbornly doing something, or leaving something undone is not sinning willfully, even persistently going against light, is not the willful sin of Hebrews 10:26. Such conduct comes because of "sin in the flesh," which has not been judged. Such failing saints do not deliberately reject the atoning work of Jesus Christ, or insult the Spirit of grace, but they fail, usually because of a misapprehension of the truth and fail to appropriate the full provision of grace. They do not count the old man dead, judging every motion of self the moment it rises, and take Christ as their only and all sufficiency. Therefore, there is a vast difference between Hebrews 10:29 and 6:9. The former cannot refer to believers, and the latter refers only to believers, who cannot "sin willfully."

"For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned" (6:7-8). What a beautiful illustration from nature, defining the two classes of men: "those" who reject the "Lamb of God,"



and "you" who accept Him. The earth becomes fruitful by drinking in the rain which falls upon the ground, but that which is stony and rough, remains barren because it does not drink. The whole country becomes a partaker of the rain; likewise, all Israel were blessed with Jesus' ministry, and the Spirit was poured out upon them all, but only a few ate of Christ and drank of the Spirit.

Jesus said: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:63). Israel tasted of Christ, they were convinced that He was the Messiah, but they refused to "eat" Him, or take Him as their Redeemer and Savior. They refused the rainfall, the Holy Spirit. Of course they produced only thorns and thistles of persecution. The burnings of just judgment await all who reject God's Son.

Chapter 6:9 should finally set us at rest. "But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." This group trusted in Jesus as the only Sin-bearer, but the apostle finds the reason for his persuasion in God's faithfulness rather than in saints. He adds, "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward His Name, in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister," even though they had not gone on and grown as they should have. It was their privilege through the ample provision of grace to become of "full age," and be far more useful, and accordingly receive a much greater reward. And his epistle was written for our profit as well as for the Hebrews.

This is the essential meaning of Matthew 12:32: An offense against Jesus as the Son of Man could be forgiven, but attributing the miracles of Christ to Satan, was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, because He wrought all His miracles in the power of the Spirit (Mark 3:29-30). It was a rejection of the atonement of Christ, because only by His substitutionary death were His miracles made possible. Sickness is the result of sin, and had it not been God's purpose to "put away sin by the sacrifice of Christ," He could not have empowered Him to heal the sick and cast out demons. Hence, to reject Jesus Christ as the only Redeemer and Savior by means of His sacrificial death is to sin willfully." This is the unpardonable sin. A believer cannot commit that sin, or "sin willfully," or "blaspheme against the Holy Spirit," **because he has already accepted the atonement of Christ.**

Gentiles as well as Jews are continually committing the unpardonable sin in rejecting the sacrificial atoning death of Jesus Christ. "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men" (if they believe), because "Christ died for our sins." But the willful sin, the rejection of His death on the cross, cannot be forgiven



because "there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sin;" that is, there is no other sin-bearer but Christ. All religions of works commit the unpardonable sin, because they reject the necessity of shedding the blood of Christ. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in Himself; he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son: and this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (I John 5:10-11).

A Reason To Sing

When I have a heavy burden
And my head is bending low
I carry it straight to Jesus;
It's the only place to go.

He can take all the sorrow
With the anxiety, doubts and fears.
He can take a heart that's aching
And eyes that are filled with tears,

Replace them with a rainbow
'Neath the shadow of His wings;
Suddenly the heart that's aching
Has found a reason to sing!
-Dottlee Duggan Reid