

CHAPTER 13

OBJECTIONS AS TO PAST SINS ANSWERED

AND thus also you may see that the doctrine of the Gospel is of great advantage to the people of God that are already come in, or to them that shall at the consideration hereof be willing to come in, to partake of the glorious benefits of this glorious covenant. But, saith the poor soul,

Objection. Alas! I doubt this is too good for me.

Inquirer. Why so, I pray you?

Objection. Alas! because I am a sinner.

Reply. Why, all this is bestowed upon none but sinners, as it is written, While we were ungodly, Christ died for us (^{<486>}Romans 5:6, 8).

“He came into the world to save sinners”
(^{<505>}1 Timothy 1:15).

Objection. O, but I am one of the chief of sinners.

Reply. Why, this is for the chief of sinners — “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief,” saith Paul (^{<505>}1 Timothy 1:15).

Objection. O, but my sins are so big, that I cannot conceive how I should have mercy.

Reply. Why, soul? Didst thou ever kill anybody? Didst thou ever burn any of thy children in the fire to idols? Hast thou been a witch? Didst thou ever use enchantments and conjuration? [You that are resolved to go on in your sins, meddle not with this]. Didst thou ever curse, and swear, and deny Christ? And yet if thou hast, there is yet hopes of pardon; yea, such sinners as these have been pardoned, as appears by these and the like Scriptures, ^{<480>}2 Chronicles 33:1-10, compared with ^{<480>}2 Chronicles 33:12,

13. Again, ~~4499~~ Acts 19:19, 20; ~~4482~~ Acts 8:22, compared with ~~4489~~ Acts 8:9; ~~4464~~ Matthew 26:74, 75.

Objection. But though I have not sinned in such kind of sins, yet it may be I have sinned as bad.

Answer. That cannot likely be; yet though thou hast, still there is ground of mercy for thee, forasmuch as thou art under the promise (~~4467~~ John 6:37).

Objection. Alas! man, I am afraid that I have sinned the unpardonable sin, and therefore there is no hope for me.

Answer. Dost thou know what the unpardonable sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost, is? and when it is committed?

Reply. It is a sin against light.

Answer. That is true; yet every sin against light is not the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Reply. Say you so?

Answer. Yea, and I prove it thus — If every sin against light had been the sin that is unpardonable, then had David and Peter and others sinned that sin; but though they did sin against light, yet they did not sin that sin; therefore every sin against light is not the sin against the Holy Ghost, the unpardonable sin.

Objection. But the Scripture saith, “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.”

Answer. Do you know what that willful sin is?

Reply. Why, what is it? Is it not for a man to sin willingly after enlightening?

Answer.

1. Yes; yet doubtless every willing sin is not that; for then David had sinned it when he lay with Bathsheba; and Jonah, when he fled from

the presence of the Lord; and Solomon also, when he had so many concubines.

2. But that sin is a sin that is of another nature, which is this — For a man after he hath made some profession of salvation to come alone by the blood of Jesus, together with some light and power of the same upon his spirit; I say, for him after this knowingly, willfully, and despitefully to trample upon the blood of Christ shed on the Cross, and to count it an unholy thing, or no better than the blood of another man, and rather to venture his soul any other way than to be saved by this precious blood. And this must be done, I say, after some light (⁶⁰⁰ Hebrews 6:4, 5) despitefully (⁶⁰¹ Hebrews 10:29) knowingly (⁶⁰² Peter 2:21) and willfully (⁶⁰³ Hebrews 10:26 compared with ⁶⁰⁴ Hebrews 10:29) and that not in a hurry and sudden fit, as Peter's was, but with some time beforehand to pause upon it first, with Judas; and also with a continued resolution never to turn or be converted again; "for it is impossible to renew such again to repentance," they are so resolved and so desperate (⁶⁰⁵ Hebrews 6).

Question. And how sayest thou now? Didst thou ever, after thou hadst received some blessed light from Christ, willfully, despitefully, and knowingly stamp or trample the blood of the Man Christ Jesus under thy feet? and art thou for ever resolved so to do?

Answer. O no; I would not do that willfully, despitefully, and knowingly, not for all the world.

Inquiry. But yet I must tell you, now you put me in mind of it, surely sometimes I have most horrible blasphemous thoughts in me against God, Christ, and the Spirit. May not these be that sin I trow?

Answer. Dost thou delight in them? Are they such things as thou takest pleasure in?

Reply. O no; neither would I do it for a thousand worlds. O, methinks they make me sometimes tremble to think of them. But how and if I should delight in them before I am aware?

Answer. Beg of God for strength against them, and if at any time thou findest thy wicked heart to give way in the least thereto, for that is likely

enough, and though thou find it may on a sudden give way to that Hell-bred wickedness that is in it, yet do not despair, forasmuch as Christ hath said, “All manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven to the sons of men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man,” that is Christ, as he may do with Peter, through temptation, yet upon repentance, “it shall be forgiven him” (⁴¹²³Matthew 12:31, 32).

Objection. But I thought it might have been committed all on a sudden, either by some blasphemous thought, or else by committing some other horrible sin.

Answer. For certain, this sin and the commission of it doth lie in a knowing, willful, malicious, or spiteful, together with a final trampling the blood of sweet Jesus under foot (³⁸⁰¹Hebrews 10).

Objection. But it seems to be rather a resisting of the Spirit, and the motions thereof, than this which you say; for, first, its proper title is the sin against the Holy Ghost; and again, “They have done despite unto the Spirit of grace;” so that it rather seems to be, I say, that a resisting of the Spirit, and the movings thereof, is that sin.

Answer. 1. For certain, the sin is committed by them that do as before I have said — that is, by a final, knowing, willful, malicious trampling under foot the blood of Christ, which was shed on Mount Calvary when Jesus was there crucified. And though it be called the sin against the Spirit, yet as I said before, every sin against the Spirit is not that; for if it were, then every sin against the light and convictions of the Spirit would be unpardonable; but that is an evident untruth, for these reasons — First, Because there be those who have sinned against the movings of the Spirit, and that knowingly too, and yet did not commit that sin; as Jonah, who when God had expressly by His Spirit bid him go to Nineveh, he runs thereupon quite another way. Secondly, Because the very people that have sinned against the movings of the Spirit are yet, if they do return, received to mercy. Witness also Jonah, who though he had sinned against the movings of the Spirit of the Lord in doing contrary thereunto, “yet when he called,” as he saith, “to the Lord,” out of the belly of Hell, “the LORD heard him, and gave him deliverance, and set him again about his work.” Read the whole story of that Prophet. But,

Answer. 2. I shall show you that it must needs be willfully, knowingly, and a malicious rejecting of the Man Christ Jesus as the Savior — that is, counting His blood, His righteousness, His intercession in His own Person, for he that rejects one rejects all, to be of no value as to salvation; I say, this I shall show you is the unpardonable sin, and then afterwards in brief show you why it is called the sin against the Holy Ghost.

1. That man that doth reject, as aforesaid, the blood, death, righteousness, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of the Man Christ, doth reject that sacrifice, that blood, that righteousness, that victory, that rest, that God alone hath appointed for salvation — “Behold the Lamb,” or sacrifice, “of God” (^{~402}John 1:29).

“We have redemption through His blood”
(^{~400}Ephesians 1:7).

That I may “be found in Him” — to wit, in Christ’s righteousness, with Christ’s own personal obedience to His Father’s will (^{~300}Philippians 3:7-10). By His resurrection comes justification (^{~405}Romans 4:25). His intercession now in His own Person in the Heavens, now absent from His saints, is the cause of the saints’ perseverance (^{~403}Romans 8:33-39).

2. They that reject this sacrifice, and the merits of this Christ, which He by Himself hath brought in for sinners, have rejected Him through whom alone all the promises of the New Testament, together with all the mercy discovered thereby, doth come unto poor creatures — “For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him amen, unto the glory of God” (^{~404}2 Corinthians 1:20). And all spiritual blessings are made over to us through Him; that is, through and in this Man, which is Christ, we have all our spiritual, heavenly, and eternal mercies (^{~400}Ephesians 1:3, 4).

3. He that doth knowingly, willfully, and despitefully reject this Man for salvation doth sin the unpardonable sin, because there is never another sacrifice to be offered. “There is no more offering for sin. — There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin,” (^{~308}Hebrews 10:18-26); namely, than the offering of the body of Jesus Christ a sacrifice once for all (^{~300}Hebrews 10:10, 14, compared with 18, 26). No; but they that shall, after light and clear conviction, reject the first offering of His body for salvation, do crucify Him the second time, which irrecoverably merits their own

damnation — “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” (^{<300>}Hebrews 6:4-6). “If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.” And why so? Seeing, saith the Apostle, they do crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and do put Him to an open shame. O, then, how miserably hath the devil deceived some, in that he hath got them to reject the merits of the first offering of the body of Christ, which was for salvation, and got them to trust in a fresh crucifying of Christ, which unavoidably brings their speedy damnation.

4. They that do reject this Man, as aforesaid, do sin the unpardonable sin, because in rejecting Him they do make way for the justice of God to break out upon them, and to handle them as it shall find them; which will be, in the first place, sinners against the first covenant; and also despising of, even the life, and glory, and consolations, pardon, grace, and love, that is discovered in the second covenant, forasmuch as they reject the Mediator and priest of the same, which is the Man Jesus. And the man that doth so, I would fain see how his sins should be pardoned, and his soul saved, seeing the means, which is the Son of Man, the Son of Mary, and His merits, are rejected; “for,” saith He, “if you believe not that I am He, you shall,” mark, “you shall,” do what you can; “you shall,” appear where you can; “you shall,” follow Moses’ law, or any holiness whatsoever, “ye shall die in your sins” (^{<400>}John 8:24). So that, I say, the sin that is called the unpardonable sin is a knowing, willful, and spiteful rejecting of the sacrificing of the Son of Man the first time for sin.

And now to show you why it is called the sin against the Holy Ghost, as in these Scriptures, (^{<100>}Matthew 12; ^{<300>}Hebrews 10; ^{<400>}Mark 3).

1. Because they sin against the manifest light of the Spirit, as I said before; it is a sin against the light of the Spirit — that is, they have been formerly enlightened into the nature of the Gospel and the merits of the Man Christ, and His blood, righteousness, intercession, etc.; and also professed and confessed the same, with some life and comfort in and through the

profession of Him; yet now against all that light, maliciously, and with despite to all their former profession, turn their backs and trample upon the same.

2. It is called the sin against the Holy Ghost because such a person doth, as I may say, lay violent hands on it; one that sets himself in opposition to, and is resolved to resist all the motions that do come in from the Spirit to persuade the contrary. For I do verily believe that men, in this very rejecting of the Son of God, after some knowledge of Him, especially at their first resisting and refusing of Him, they have certain motions of the Spirit of God to dissuade them from so great a soul-damning act. But they, being filled with an overpowering measure of the spirit of the devil, do despite unto these convictions and motions by studying and contriving how they may answer them, and get from under the convincing nature of them, and therefore it is called a doing despite unto the Spirit of Grace (³⁰²Hebrews 10:29). And so,

3. In that they do reject the beseeching of the Spirit, and all its gentle entreatings of the soul to tarry still in the same doctrine.

4. In that they do reject the very testimony of the Prophets and Apostles with Christ Himself; I say, their testimony, through the Spirit, of the power, virtue, sufficiency, and prevalency of the blood, sacrifice, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of the Man Christ Jesus, of which the Scriptures are full both in the Old and New Testament, as the Apostle saith, for all the Prophets from Samuel, with them that follow after, have showed of these days — that is, in which Christ should be a sacrifice for sin (⁴⁰²Acts 3:24, compared with ⁴⁰⁶Acts 3:6, 13-15, 18, 26). Again, saith, he,

“He therefore that despiseth not man, but God; who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit” (⁵⁰⁸1 Thessalonians 4:8);

that is, he rejecteth or despiseth the very testimony of the Spirit.

5. It is called the sin against the Holy Ghost, because he that doth reject and disown the doctrine of salvation by the Man Christ Jesus, through believing in Him, doth despise, resist, and reject the wisdom of the Spirit; for the wisdom of God’s Spirit did never more appear than its finding out a way for sinners to be reconciled to God by the death of this Man; and

therefore Christ, as He is a sacrifice, is called the wisdom of God. And again, when it doth reveal the Lord Jesus it is called the

“Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him”
(⁴⁰¹⁷Ephesians 1:17).

Objection. But, some may say, the slighting or rejecting of the Son of Man, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Mary, cannot be the sin that is unpardonable, as is clear from that Scripture in ⁴¹²³Matthew 12:32, where He Himself saith, “Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” Now by this it is clear that the sin that is unpardonable is one thing, and the sin against the Son of Man another; that sin that is against the Son of Man is pardonable; but if that was the sin against the Holy Ghost, it would not be pardonable; therefore the sin against the Son of Man is not the sin against the Holy Ghost, the unpardonable sin.

Answer.

1. I do know full well that there are several persons that have been pardoned, yet have sinned against the Son of Man, and that have for a time rejected Him, as Paul (⁵¹¹³1 Timothy 1:13, 14) also the Jews (⁴¹²³Acts 2:36, 37). But there was an ignorant rejecting of Him, without the enlightening, and taste, and feeling of the power of the things of God, made mention in ³¹¹³Hebrews 6:3-6.

2. There is and hath been a higher manner of sinning against the Son of Man, which also hath been, and is still, pardonable; as in the case of Peter, who in a violent temptation, in a mighty hurry, upon a sudden denied Him, and that after the revelation of the Spirit of God from Heaven to him, that He, Jesus, was the Son of God (⁴¹¹⁶Matthew 16:16-18). This also is pardonable, if there be a coming up again to repentance. O, rich grace! O, wonderful grace! that God should be so full of love to His poor creatures, that though they do sin against the Son of God, either through ignorance, or some sudden violent charge breaking loose from Hell upon them, but yet take it for certain that if a man do slight and reject the Son of God and the Spirit in that manner as I have before hinted — that is, for a man after some great measure of

the enlightening by the Spirit of God, and some profession of Jesus Christ to be the Savior, and His blood that was shed on the mount without the gates of Jerusalem to be the Atonement; I say, he that shall after this knowingly, willfully, and out of malice and despite reject, speak against, and trample that doctrine under foot, resolving for ever so to do, and if he there continue, I will pawn my soul upon it, he hath sinned the unpardonable sin, and shall never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come; or else these Scriptures that testify the truth of this must be scrabbled out, and must be looked upon for mere fables, which are these following — “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” which is the Son of Man (^{406B}Matthew 16:13) “and are again entangled therein, and overcome,” which must be by denying this Lord that brought them (^{61B}2 Peter 2:1) “the latter end is worse with them than the beginning,” (^{62B}2 Peter 2:20). For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift — and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they shall fall away,” not only fall, but fall away, that is, finally (^{51B}Hebrews 10:29) “it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance;” and the reason is rendered, “seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God,” which is the Son of Man, “afresh, and put Him to an open shame” (^{50B}Hebrews 6:4-6). Now if you would further know what it is to crucify the Son of God afresh, it is this — for to undervalue and trample under foot the merits and virtue of His blood for remission of sins, as is clearly manifested in ^{51B}Hebrews 10:26-28, where it is said, “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. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy, — of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God,” there is the second crucifying of Christ, which the Quakers think to be saved by, “and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing,” — and then followeth — “and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?” (^{51B}Hebrews 10:29). All that Paul had to keep him from this sin was, his ignorance in persecuting the Man and merits of Jesus

Christ (⁴⁰⁰Acts 9). But I obtained mercy, saith he, because I did it ignorantly (^{341B}1 Timothy 1:13). And Peter, though he did deny Him knowingly, yet he did it unwillingly, and in a sudden and fearful temptation, and so by the intercession of Jesus escaped that danger. So, I say, they that commit this sin, they do it after light, knowingly, willfully, and despitefully, and in the open view of the whole world reject the Son of Man for being their Lord and Savior, and in that it is called the sin against the Holy Ghost. It is a name most fit for this sin to be called the sin against the Holy Ghost, for these reasons but now laid down; for this sin is immediately committed against the motions, and convictions, and light of the Holy Spirit of God that makes it its business to hand forth and manifest the truth and reality of the merits and virtues of the Lord Jesus, the Son of Man. And therefore beware, Ranters and Quakers, for I am sure you are the nearest that sin by profession, which is, indeed, the right committing of it, of any persons that I do know at this day under the whole heavens, forasmuch as you will not venture the salvation of your souls on the blood shed on Mount Calvary, out of the side of that Man that was offered up in sacrifice for all that did believe (^{423B}Luke 23:33). In that His offering up of His body at that time, either before He offered it, or that have, do, or shall believe on it for the time since, together with that time that He offered it, though formerly you did profess that salvation was wrought out that way, by that sacrifice then offered, and also seemed to have some comfort thereby; yea, insomuch that some of you declared the same in the hearing of many, professing yourselves to be believers of the same. O, therefore, it is sad for you that were once enlightened, and have tasted these good things, and yet, notwithstanding all your profession, you are now turned from the simplicity that is in Christ to another doctrine, which will be your destruction, if you continue in it; for without blood there is no remission (^{302D}Hebrews 9:22).

Many other reasons might be given, but that I would not be too tedious; yet I would put in this caution, that if there be any souls that be but now willing to venture their salvation upon the merits of a naked Jesus, I do verily for the present believe they have not sinned that sin, because there is still a promise holds forth itself to such a soul where Christ saith, “Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise,” for nothing that he hath done, “cast

him out” (John 6:37). That promise is worth to be written in letters of gold.