

No More Conscience of Sins

Heb. 10: 2

W. Kelly.

It is not enough to believe that the atoning work is done, great a truth as it is. The Christian knows that Christ entered once and for all into the holiest, having obtained everlasting redemption. There and now He appears before the face of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, else He must often have suffered, which could not be. But now once in the consummation of the ages He hath been manifested for putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Such is the Christian's confession not of His person only but of His work. But the Holy Spirit follows it all up by declaring its revealed effect, in contrast with those under the shadows of law and its sacrifices which they offer continuously year by year, unable as they are to perfect those that approach. "Else would they not have ceased to be offered? because the worshippers having been once purged would have had no more conscience of sins." This is the result for every Christian. So perfect is the cleansing of the worshippers one and all, that they have "no more conscience of sins."

"Believest thou this," my reader? It is revealed as the consequence of Christ's work, not for some only but for all that believe. Do you believe it for your own soul? It is of the utmost moment that you should receive it as God's mind about yourself; as the settled and continuous state Christ's work has effected for you and every other Christian, that you may enjoy it by faith, honour Christ in it, bless God through it, worship and serve in the consciousness the indwelling Spirit gives of so great a privilege.

1. Time was in your unconverted days when you made light of sins, and tried to quiet yourself that as we were all sinners, it was no wonder if you sinned like others; but then God was very merciful to those so born and brought up with bad examples on every side. Conscience awoke qualms now and then, especially when you read or heard scripture warning of God's hatred of evil and of His judgment righteous and inevitable. But you soon went to sleep again after a vain effort to do well. It never occurred to you that you were by nature a child of wrath, and Satan's slave by doing your own will. You went to church or chapel, you read the Bible or good books occasionally, being in fact not so bad as many you could name but that charity forbade it. During this while you practically had no conscience of sins, save a painful twitch now and then which quickly passed and left you no better but worse.

2. A moment came when God by His word and Spirit laid on your conscience your evil, dangerous and lost state. No longer did you parry the dread conviction that you were wicked and ungodly, an enemy of God, and powerless for good. But He probed the wounds, and made their depth felt, and gave you to bow down in the confession of your guilt, and of your corrupt and wilful nature. Palliatives you refused, and you loathed yourself, and cried to Him whose goodness was leading you to repentance; and like Peter at the knees of the Lord Jesus, you said, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord; yet still like him, there you knelt, and owned Him as your hope. You had now the conscience of your sins, and the dread of God; but to go away from Jesus, No, No. To whom should you go? He had words of life eternal; He was the propitiation for sins; and you felt the need of both.

3. How precious then to hear from the Lord Jesus, the judge of quick and dead, that He came, the Sent of God, to give all of which the Holy Spirit made you feel the want! to give it in the fulness of love and grace and truth according to the worth of Christ and His work in His sight. Who but He could

even have conceived of such a standing as "no more conscience of sins" for such as had been brought to the feet of Jesus, owning themselves as nothing but guilty and lost? Yet there and then never had they so deep a sense of their inexcusable evil; never was the burden of their sins felt to be so intolerable. The gospel of God was His answer in the cleansing power of Christ's blood. It cleanses from all guilt, from every sin, him that believes. Rest then on Him at God's word for your iniquities; and they are remembered no more.

We may and ought to remember our sins as the witness of our ruin, of God's righteousness, of Christ's grace, and of the efficacy of His work. Henceforth this is our new place as Christians. Having been once purged we have no more conscience of sins. When unconverted we were dark and dead as to any right sense of our state or of God's abhorrence of them and necessary war against them. But now that we believe, God sees not our shameful sins but the blood of Christ, which has for ever and completely effaced them. Thus the worshippers, having been once purged, have no more conscience of sins.

Dear reader, this is a fundamental truth of the gospel; and God looks for your appropriating it to the utmost, as due to His own Son's suffering once for your sins. It is here in its unmeasured fulness of blessing without a word to qualify it or any statement of the resource of grace, if a believer should sin. This we have in 1 John 2: 1, 2, but not in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is occupied with our drawing near to God, not with the provision for restoring our communion when interrupted by sin. The serious thing for believers now is the same defect as characterised the Hebrew saints to whom the great Epistle was written. Therefore are they so fully instructed in that perfected state of the conscience to which Christ's work entitles them, but which few, then as now, enter into as becomes them. This is pursued in Heb. 10: 9, 10, and especially in 12-14. "But he [in contrast with the Jewish priest], having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down continuously at God's right hand, waiting from henceforth till his enemies be set as footstool of his feet. For by one offering he hath perfected continuously the sanctified." It is a description of the standing His work gains for every true Christian, not a special attainment of some, but the new and common privilege for all by faith.

What a living illustration Peter affords in Acts 3: 13 of a worshipper once purged, having a clear conscience! How else could he charge the men of Israel with denying Jesus? Had *he* not denied Him notoriously, recently, and repeatedly with oaths? Now so completely was he cleansed by the Saviour's blood, that he boldly taxed them with that sin! Had it not been effaced, he must have been ashamed to whisper the words. This clearance you by faith are entitled to know and say as to all your sins. You owe it to the Saviour and may you own it for His glory. W.K.