

THE "WITNESS" MANUALS, No. 5.

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# Sin :

Its Nature,  
Consequences,  
and Remedy



By GEORGE GOODMAN.

# The "Witness" Manuals.

Edited by C. F. HOGG and W. E. VINE, M.A.

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## FOREWORD.

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'GOOD medicine offends the palate; sound words offend the ear,' so the Chinese proverb runs. The subject of these pages cannot be described as popular. Herein is no flattery for the reader, but some wholesome truth, plainly and moderately stated.

Sin is a dominating factor in human life, playing its part none the less because it has been voted non-existent, as the Devil was voted long ago. But Sin and the Devil persist, despite the popular verdict.

The Bible, that mirror of human life, has much to say anent sin. The New Testament requires almost twenty different words to describe it. Sin is the undischarged debt of the creation to the Creator, the crossing of the frontiers of righteousness, the missing of the mark, the mistaken fruits of culpable ignorance, lawless self-will in thought and deed, discord where God meant harmony.

That sin is not of the essence of manhood is plain, for Christ, the realised ideal of manhood, was sinless. Sin is an intruder to which man himself opened the door by disobedience. And from sin and from sin's consequences, there would be no escape were it not for the Cross of the sinless Christ.

C.F.H.

# SIN:

## Its Nature, Consequences, and Remedy.

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SIN is a great fact. It is perhaps the best attested fact in the world except death, which is its wages.

It is an obvious fact in *personal experience*, each of us having a conscience "accusing us," and knowing something of that state described by the apostle of the Gentiles in the words "When I would do good, evil is present with me" (Rom. 7. 21).

It is an indisputable fact *in history*.

One need have but a slight acquaintance with the pages of history, the records of the courts of justice, or the reports of such societies as those established for the rescue of the fallen, or for the prevention of cruelty to children, or even to animals, to convince him of man's fallen estate.

One is dismayed at the story of "man's inhumanity to man."

When he has acquired authority over his fellowmen he has too frequently shown himself unworthy of power, and unable to exercise it,

history proving to be the oft-repeated tale of  
 “ Truth for ever on the scaffold,  
 Wrong for ever on the throne.”

The testimony of experience and history is, as we shall see later, borne out by *revelation*.

The Scriptures beginning with the account

“ Of man’s first disobedience and the fruit  
 Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
 Brought death into the world and all our woe,”

are largely occupied with the work of grace in redemption from the curse and power of sin.

The Scriptures allege that “ there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not ” (Eccles. 7. 20), and the truer and holier men have sought to be, the more readily they have acknowledged the justice of the indictment.

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I.

## SIN : ITS NATURE.

What is sin? In the language of the great apostle it is described as a *law*.

“ I find then A LAW, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.” “ I see A law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, . . . the law of sin which is in my members ” (Rom. 7. 21, 23).

This word law is defined by John Owen, the

Puritan chaplain of Oliver Cromwell, as “a powerful and effectual indwelling principle which inclines to, and when unprevented works its way which is, evil.”

Just as the law of fire is to burn, so the law of sin is to lust after evil. Thus sin is in man a principle producing evil fruit. It was this that led the apostle to say, “I am carnal, sold under sin.” And so to distinguish between himself and the evil principle or law of sin which was “in the flesh” or “in my members,” as to draw a strong line of demarcation between the two, twice he boldly asserts: “It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me” (Rom. 7. 17, 20).

### The Seat of Sin.

Sin is stated to reside “in the heart,” as when Christ said, “Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts” (Mark 7. 21), and the heart, as so indwelt by sin, is stated to be “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer. 17. 9).

It is also stated to reside “in the flesh” and “in the members,” as having acquired power and control over them.

“Sin in the flesh” is often spoken of by the shorter term “the flesh,” which, since the fall, has been evil only, for sin reigns in it, as Paul said, “In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.” “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit,”

we are told, and "the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Gal. 5. 17; Rom. 8. 7).

The works of the flesh, enumerated in the fifth chapter of Galatians which might equally well be defined as the works of sin), show us what is to be expected from "the body of sin" (Rom. 6. 6), "the body of this death" (Rom. 7. 24), or "the natural man" (1 Cor. 2. 14), as it is variously called.

It must not, however, be thought that the natural body is itself sinful. It is indeed the body of our humiliation for a time, and has suffered much from sin, but it is itself the "earthly house," and is to be nourished and cherished.

This evil principle, sin, is discovered to have certain qualities, and it is of these we must next speak.

### The Qualities of Sin.

I. The first quality we note is that of *deceit*.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

"Above all things" is sin deceitful, hiding itself under many disguises and assuming innocent forms to cover its moral deformity.

Thus the Lord exposed the hypocrisy of His times:

"Ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess" (Matt. 23. 25).

It is a solemn fact that sin often assumes a moral and even religious guise, and submits to the suppression of many of its outward manifestations, in order to work its will, finding outlets less obnoxious to general opinion or to the society and custom in the realm in which it moves:

It will conform to creeds, connect itself with religious bodies, even assume the solemn offices of ministry, and become a professor and, in some measure not too exacting, a practiser of what are known as good works.

Too proud to act as it would were there no such suppressing opinion and influences, sin nevertheless works its will secretly.

This deceit extends ; it not only attempts to mislead others, but is largely self-deceptive.

The conscience is seared and the mind darkened so that it cannot "see afar off;" thus man often "makes such a sinner of his memory as to credit his own lie."

2. A second quality of sin is *unbelief*.

It is written, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14. 23).

This verse contains, perhaps, what is one of the most striking contrasts in the Word of God. *Faith* and *Sin* stand in bold opposition. Nothing could more plainly illustrate the quality or nature of sin than its contrast with faith. The eternal destinies of man hang on these two words.

The soul that sins dies. The soul that believes lives:

The words are the antithesis one of the other : Sin—Faith—while each assists to the understanding of the other.

What is *sin* ? It is man in defiant independence of God.

What is *faith* ? It is man in submissive dependence upon God.

*Sin* viewed in its relation to God is the rejection of His counsels, His guidance, His love, His help, His claim.

*Faith* is the surrender of the mind and will to the authority of Christ, the submission to God's righteousness (Rom. 10. 3), all these being included in the words, "the obedience of faith" (Rom. 16. 26).

When our Lord Jesus spoke of the coming and work of the Holy Ghost, He stated that He would convict the world of sin, and added, "*because they believe not on Me*" (John 16. 9).

It is of the essence of sin that it prefers its own counsels to those of the Living God ; that it reposes no confidence or trust in His Word ; that it pays no attention to His prophets ; that it has "its own opinions," "its own views." This is at once the guilt and the folly of sin, for man, once having forsaken and forgotten the Living God, has found no lie too impossible to believe, no folly or superstition too gross and stupid to trust.

Those who have refused to believe God or to accept His Word have often become the most simple-minded in their faith in absurdities. A case in point came under our notice a few years ago. There had been a blasphemous rejection of the Gospel and the Word of God, on the ground that the age was too enlightened to receive them, and later the same persons became advocates of Spiritism, alleging that spirits wrote messages on scraps of paper which fell mysteriously into a cupboard. Well did the apostle write of such: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

Who so worthy of faith as the Living God? What so deserving of belief as the Word of His grace? Who shall be counted so guilty as he who refuses both?

3. A third quality of sin is its *lawlessness*. "Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3. 4), in the R.V. rendered, "Sin is lawlessness."

While unbelief may be said to be sin as it affects God, lawlessness may be said to be sin as it relates to man himself. He becomes not only independent of God, but regardless of law. He thinks and acts without reference to any will but his own, and that will led astray by divers lusts and passions. He is described as "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind" (Eph. 2. 3). So that he is lawless even to his own will, ceasing in his lawlessness to be a free agent, for in com-

mitting sin he becomes the bonds slave of sin, and promising himself liberty he is the servant of corruption (Rom. 6. 16; 2 Peter 2. 19). Even the light of conscience is in greater or less measure disregarded till it becomes seared as with a hot iron.

We have contrasted sin with faith; it may equally well be contrasted with obedience. The principle of lawlessness in the unregenerate becomes in the regenerate the "obeying from the heart" (Rom. 6. 17).

Not always does sin abandon all regard to law, for notwithstanding the principle of lawlessness which is an inherent quality of sin, yet fear or pride often prevents that reckless disregard of laws which would mean the loss of life. The loss of the means of gratifying the desires of the flesh and mind is feared, and this too is a deterrent. But even this regard for law is not dictated by a sense of the sanctity of law or respect to the will of God, but by a selfishness that seeks its own end by a measure of submission, and from ulterior motives, to the laws of health and life.

A merchant, in order to save his ship from sinking, throws out with his own hands the bales of goods he prizes so much, and for the sake of which the voyage was undertaken, but it is an unwilling sacrifice. So the lawless heart may submit to a necessity without which life

itself, and the opportunity of gratifying desire, could not be retained. Thus it submits to some measure of law for the sake of peace or quiet, or from fear of shame, or for health's sake, only to desire still that which it must unwillingly forfeit. The sin in all its lawlessness is there unchanged though confined by circumstances.

In the parable the keeper of the vineyard said, "*We will not have this man to reign over us.*" Such is the language of man toward God; and as regards himself he is described in the language of the Book of Judges, "*Every man did that which was right in his own eyes*" (21. 25); or in that of the prophet Isaiah, "*We have turned every one to his own way*" (Isa. 53. 6).

4. A fourth quality of sin is *unrighteousness*. "All unrighteousness is sin" (1. John 5. 17) Just as "unbelief" is sin viewed in relation to God, and "lawlessness" as it affects the man himself, so unrighteousness may be said to be sin as it affects one's neighbour.

The sinner is unrighteous toward his neighbour. Indeed, sin and love are as pronounced contrasts as sin and faith were shown to be.

When man first fell into sin he was promised that he should become "as God" (Gen. 3. 5, R.V.). He has since that day loved, sought, and fought for power over his fellowman, but if he has attained it he has generally shown himself to be unrighteous not only unworthy of the dignity,

but, as before stated, unable to exercise the authority thus placed in his hands.

Whether it be the despotic king or the demos, or crowd, that governs, the earth has been full of cruelty from age to age. And when in the name of religion men have usurped authority over their fellowmen, the nations have stood aghast at the tyranny and cruelty that has become drunken with the blood of the saints.

This principle of unrighteousness is seen in operation in all spheres; men become "hateful and hating one another" (Titus 3. 3), regarding nothing but their own gratification at the cost of their neighbour's right.

The immense armies and navies maintained by nations dwelling upon one continent illustrate the same fact. The police forces parading every city, town, and village, and the great gaols remind us that though often restrained by fear man in sin is unrighteous at heart. A striking illustration of this was provided in recent labour disturbances. During one riot shops were sacked and the contents thrown into the streets, and men who had never been known to steal before, and had lived as reputed honest men, were seen bearing off bales of goods thus easily placed in their power.

5. Sin has yet one more, and that a most pronounced, quality—*enmity*. "The carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom. 8. 7). This same

verse declares its lawlessness to be of an incurable kind. "It is not subject to the law of God ; neither indeed can be." Sin is *enmity against God!* High-handed rebellion, blasphemous defiance. Let us ponder this a little.

God is Light ; but there is in every sinner that which "hateth the light" (John 3. 20), and refuses to come to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

This is man's "condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3. 19).

God is Love ; but man has loved pleasure and this present evil world, and has refused to return love for love. For this cause it is written, "the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4. 4).

The principle of sin, then, is a principle of enmity against God.

"If the world hate you," said the Lord Jesus, "ye know that it hated Me before it hated you" (John 15. 18).

This enmity was shown when the Lord of Glory, the Prince of Life, had come into the world. Man slew Him.

His pure words, His searching truth, had roused the enmity of man's heart, and those who heard Him shouted Him to death with the

cry, "Away with Him, crucify Him." In this they acted as the representatives of man in general.

The Cross of Christ tells us the solemn truth that sin is enmity against God. "They hated Him without a cause."

### The Manifestation of Sin.

Having considered the nature and quality of sin, the evil indwelling principle in the flesh, let us consider it in its manifestations.

It is necessary to distinguish sin, the principle from sins, the actions, the omissions and commissions engendered by the evil within.

One drop of water is in its nature the same as the ocean. One spark is of the very essence of fire. So sins are but the outward evidences of inward wrong.

The tree is sin, its fruits are sins.

The disease is sin, the spots and other outward troubles, which are but the symptoms, are sins.

Sin is the same in all ; sins are as various as the persons themselves.

The fact of sin is the same in all.

The form sin takes is different in each case.

The form that sin takes, that is, the manner in which it discovers itself, depends upon many things.

For example :

(a) *Heredity* is often the determining factor. Sin is present in all ; how it will break out is

determined in many cases by those predispositions with which some are born.

A drunkard's child will be predisposed, not predestined, to drink. Sin, looking for some outlet, will take the path of least resistance, and finding a tendency ready to hand, will break out in drunkenness. Crime is known to run in families. Recently the descendants of a pair of habitual criminals were traced, and an appalling list of crimes was shown to have been committed by members of that one family.

(b) *The conditions of birth and nurture* are also a predisposing element in the manifestation of sin.

A child is born in a slum surrounded by every form of vice and crime ; at the same time another is born in a palace with every kind of culture and refinement around him. In each the heart is the same, but how great is the difference in the form and manner in which the sin discovers itself in action.

(c) *The environments of life* determine often the form that sin assumes. The choice of books, of friends, even chances, so-called, decide for us the channel in which our lives run.

Just as the course of a stream is determined by the formation of the watershed in which it rises, or by the rocks and boulders lying in its path, so it is with the restless heart of man ; in its lawlessness its course is determined for it by the accidents of the way.

6. *The guilt of sin is not to be estimated by its outward manifestations.*

Passing along the Strand at midnight a Christian man saw a wretched woman steeped in drink reeling along in a fearful state, till at length she fell prostrate in the gutter, and there lay helpless until she was carried to the police-station. Looking on with an amused smile stood a young man in evening dress at the porch of a theatre. His fine manly form stood out in the brilliant light, as with gloved hands he relit the cigar that he had allowed to go out while he watched the poor woman. It was a refined, and pleasant face, full of health and the interest of life. As the Christian contemplated the scene, the thought passed through his mind, Who shall determine which is the more guilty of the two—the lover of pleasure rather than of God, or the drunkard nearing the last stages of a guilty course? Were the whole truth known, the one may have been but the creature of circumstances, so far as the course that sin took is concerned, born of criminal parents, nursed in crime, fed on strong drink, falling easily a prey to a predisposition to evil and to the circumstances conducive to its development; the other may have been the child of godly parents, disobedient at once to parents, to conscience, and to God.

As regards their sin, there is no distinction, each had fallen short of the glory of God. As regards their guilt, who but a wise and omniscient God could determine its measure, or bring them into righteous judgment!

### The Universality of Sin.

Let us consider what is said of the flesh, the seat of the principle of sin.

1. *It has come to us by inheritance from Adam.* "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3. 6).

These words were spoken by our Lord under most interesting circumstances. He was explaining to Nicodemus the need of a new birth, a new spiritual creation, without which a man cannot enter into the kingdom of God. He enforces the truth by giving the reason of this great need.

Man must be born a second time, because his first birth was "of the flesh," and he was consequently "flesh."

The Fifth chapter of Romans confirms this in the history it gives of sin. "*By one man sin entered into the world,*" and from this a three-fold consequence ensued.

(a) "*Death passed upon all,*" even on those who had not personally incurred guilt:

(b) "*Judgment came upon all men to condemnation,*" that is, their inherited "flesh" came under

God's judgment and was condemned as an evil thing.

(c) "*Many were made sinners.*" By their inherited "flesh" they were constituted sinners, a fact manifest in their following every one in the footsteps of the forefather who sinned before them.

2. *The mind of the flesh (or carnal mind) is irretrievably evil.* "Flesh" is born of the flesh, and has all the mind of the flesh. "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8. 7, R.V.).

There are four "cannots" written with reference to the flesh :

(a) It cannot *enter* the kingdom of God (John 3. 5).

(b) It cannot *please* God (Rom. 8. 8).

(c) It cannot *be subject to God's law* (Rom. 8. 7).

(d) It cannot *know* the things of God (1 Cor. 2. 14).

Such is the mind of the natural man born of the flesh.

In a later chapter of the Epistle in which the above dark picture is drawn, the state of man is described by four negative propositions each beginning with the word "None." There is

*"None righteous, no, not one."*

Man's total failure to attain to righteousness is here stated. His relation to God is "not right,"

his relation to his fellowman is "wrong." There is

*"None that understandeth."*

Here the mind of man is declared to be affected. He does not know or appreciate God, "not liking to retain God in his knowledge" (Rom. i. 28), he has lost the knowledge of "the Holy." Not until God gave, as His free gift, eternal life to fallen man, in order that he might know God, was this knowledge restored (John 17. 3). There is

*"None that seeketh after God."*

The affections have become depraved, and no desire remains to find the Living God. "We desire not the knowledge of Thy ways" (Job 21. 14) is man's defiant language, and in the pride of his heart he will not seek after God. The result is manifest. Man is "out of the way" and "unprofitable." There is

*"None that doeth good, no, not one."*

This is as might be expected, for where none is righteous, understanding or seeking God, can any good result? "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one" (Job 14. 4).

These four propositions are followed by a fresh list of the manifestations of sin: the mouth full of poison, cursing and bitterness; the feet swift to shed blood; destruction and misery with no peace and no fear of God.

From these passages we see that the state,

“under sin,” produces the manifestations, or “sins,” of which the number and quality are very various. It is because of these that we read, “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness” (Rom. i. 18).

For man is not only a sinner, but a guilty sinner, and a guilty sinner without excuse.

There is no exception (Rom. 3. 19).

There is no excuse (Rom. i. 20).

There is no escape (Rom. 2. 3).

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## II.

### **SIN : ITS CONSEQUENCES.**

If evidence is required of the sinfulness of sin, and of the judgment of God upon it, it is found in the fact that sin is visited even

#### **In This Life**

with marks of His disapproval.

Almost all writers upon Christian evidences have claimed that the known results of sin establish the fact of a moral Governor of the universe, and the argument remains unanswered.

The fact that breaches of the law as written upon the conscience, and contained in the moral precepts of Scripture, are visited by evil consequences to the person, the social community,

and the State alike, removes the question of sin from the realm of theory to that of fact. Sin is thereby known and proved to be an evil and a guilty thing. There is perhaps no matter in which fact and revelation are so manifestly in agreement as in the realisation of the truth, "Be sure your sin will find you out;" "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

Not as a careless reader might render it, 'Be sure your sin will be found out.' There is much sinning that is never found out, and never brought into judgment in this life. God reserves judgment in many cases. "The Lord knoweth how . . . to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment" (2 Peter 2. 9, R.V.). It is therefore improper to allege, as some do, that the only judgment on sin is seen in its present consequences. The consequences of sin in this life witness to the fact of God's hatred of evil and wrath against the wicked, but must not be confounded with the righteous judgment which will one day render to every man the just recompense of his deeds.

Nevertheless the consequences of sin are *very* real, and serve an important purpose in the economy of God.

They may be briefly stated :

1. *Cases are selected by way of special example and warning.* Many a life has been ruined by, and even sudden death followed upon, a com-

paratively trifling folly, trifling as compared with the continued indulgence of the same sin in other cases. It pleases God to make examples of His wrath, that sinners may be warned.

We are told that God so used Pharaoh, "willing to show His wrath" in this "vessel of wrath fitted to destruction," and that He did the same in the case of the profane Esau, who found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. He was not allowed to regain by tears what he sacrificed to lust, but remains an example to all time of the folly of despising the gift of God.

Thus speedy retribution and irretrievable loss of privilege, position, and blessedness in this life are often allowed in the sovereign determination of God. Let the sinner tremble as he reflects upon the fact that he sins against One in Whose hand his breath is.

2. *The degeneration of moral character* is another consequence of sin in this life.

That it is accompanied by an insensibility to the loss sustained only adds to its shame.

The fact that man becomes vile by villany, unclean by impurity, and foolish by folly is an exemplification of the truth that his sin finds him out.

His deceit is often written upon his face, negatively, in the absence of the open, free, and fearless gaze that characterises an honest man,

and positively, in the shifty look and expression of suspicion that causes even children to be mistrustful of him.

But not in appearance only is this seen, in the depraved taste and vile affections is the same fact recognised.

The enormous output of prurient literature that seems to find a ready sale is a striking evidence of the widespread degeneration of morals, the demand creating the supply, the supply reacting by increasing the demand.

The call for, and popularity of, plays on the stage full of thinly veiled evil, the need found for restricting the liberty of producing moving pictures and such-like exhibitions, each witness to the degeneration of moral character.

3. *The loss of the knowledge and appreciation of the truth.* Man can by sin come to believe a lie, can so darken his foolish mind that the light of God's truth falls in vain upon it, can so sear his conscience that it ceases to accuse or excuse according to its office. He can become so hardened in heart that neither love, fear, nor pity can move him.

It has been pointed out that, generally speaking, only in countries where the truth has been preached are atheists found. The reason is plain. Light rejected becomes darkness, the immoral effort needed to refuse the truth destroys the power of recognising it, the per-

sistent choice of evil deadens the appreciation of good, and the sinner becomes "past feeling."

### Hereafter.

"Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death" (James 1. 15).

The judgment pronounced upon sin is death.

It is at once its *consequence*—"death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5. 12); its *wages*—"the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6. 13); and its *penalty*—"the soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezek. 18. 4).

There is this striking feature of death, as spoken of in Scripture: *it is never regarded as an end.*

### Death Does Not End All.

Without arguing the point the revelation proceeds always as if it were a matter of course, of common knowledge, that there is an "after death." "It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9. 27).

Those who have passed through death's portals are regarded as still continuing, and are spoken of as being elsewhere. It was with this assurance that Christ confounded the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection. God had spoken of Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

Several of those who had passed away from

this life are called back as if near at hand, living and ready to appear. Thus Christ calls, "Lazarus, come forth," as to a still living, though, as we say, dead man (John 11. 43).

Death is regarded in three ways in Scripture :

1. *As a moral state*, answering to the description, "dead while living" (1 Tim. 5. 6); "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2. 1), though still actively alive physically; and "dead" though not "in the grave," as in John 5. 25-28, where this distinction is drawn and two "hours" are spoken of; one, that "now is," when the *dead* hear the voice of the Son of God and live; and one, not yet when those *in their graves* shall hear His voice calling to resurrection.

2. *As a departure of the spirit from the body*. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccles. 12. 7).

So precious a thing is this departure in the case of the ransomed that it is likened to a falling asleep—a departure to be with Christ, which is far better than to remain on the earth (Phil. 1. 23).

### The Second Death.

In the case of the wicked it is but the entering upon those scenes of judgment so terribly portrayed in many passages. Nowhere is that dissolution of the body we know as natural death the end of the story of the evil-doer.

“They shall come forth,” was our Lord’s word —“they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment” (John 5. 29, R.V.).

3. As an everlasting state of shame and contempt, called “*the second death* ;” “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12. 2).

In this life death is separation from God in the sense that sin has destroyed all fellowship, has come between the soul and its Maker, so that moral death results, a life that is death while living. Sin thus separating the soul from God, the Author of life, results in physical death, and ultimately, in the case of those who “die in their sins” (John 8. 24), in eternal separation from God, with the solemn sentence of banishment ; “Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord” (2 Thess. 1. 9). This is the second death.

### **The Testimony of Christ.**

Sin and death are patent facts. They are before our eyes every day. Hell is as true a fact, though resting only upon revelation for its evidence. It is, however, a remarkable thing, and one not to be forgotten or overlooked, that almost all the knowledge we have of hell comes to us through the lips of our Lord Him-

self. It was He who spoke of both body and soul being destroyed in hell; of the everlasting fire, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched (Matt. 10. 28; 18. 8; Mark 9. 48). It was He who said of some, "These shall go away into everlasting fire," "into everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25. 41, 46). It was He who drew aside the veil, and showed us the rich man crying for a drop of water to cool his tongue, and described him entreating for his brothers, "lest they come to this place of torment" (Luke 16. 19-31).

He is a bold unbeliever who dares to refuse the testimony of the Lord from heaven. It is unconvincing to say that He used the language of the time, for if what He said were not fact that would be to make Him a liar.

Some have said it is figurative language; to which it has been wisely replied, "If such is the figure, what must the fact be."

There are those who assert another chance for such as die in their sins, but this is unwarranted by Scripture. If it were true, we might expect to read, "and after this [death] another chance;" but we read, "*and after this the judgment.*"

This assertion, too, contradicts the word, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3. 36).

### Will there be Another Chance?

And the words of our Lord, "Between us [in paradise] and you [in hell] there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot ; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence" (Luke 16. 26), if they are to be allowed to have any meaning, can bear no other.

Such is the terrible and eternal destiny of the sinner, except he be saved.

The revelation is clear ; it is only by doing outrage to the meaning of the words of Scripture that the conclusion can be avoided.

That the subject is not without its difficulties is true, but faith rests upon the assurance implied in the question, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" \*(Gen. 18. 25).

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### III.

## SIN : ITS REMEDY.

We would not leave the subject of sin without a few words upon the remedy.

This is found in Christ alone, "neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4. 12). He is set before us as the One who "*was dead and is alive again,*" not who was alive and is dead ; for it

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\* NOTE.—This momentous subject is introduced incidentally here ; it will, God permitting, be dealt with in a Manual in this series.

is by His death that He has redeemed us, and being risen He saves those who believe upon Him.

Would we have the forgiveness of sins, it must be through His blood; would we live in newness of life, it must be by faith in and dependence upon Him, the Living One.

There is no relief from the guilt of sin, the burdened conscience and the fear of death, except in the Cross of Christ. For there is in the moral consciousness of the sinner a sense of justice, a conscience, that will not allow sin to be passed over lightly. As one has said, "The point for us is that, no matter how sin originated in the moral consciousness in which it has its being, it is recognised as a derangement of the vital relations of man, a violation of that universal order outside of which he has no true good."

And again, speaking of the death of Christ,

"It is the recognition of this divine necessity, not to forgive, but to forgive in a way which shows that God is irreconcilable to evil, and can never treat it as other or less than it is. . . . He would not do justice to Himself if He displayed His compassion for sinners in a way which made light of sin, which ignored its tragic reality, or took it for less than it is."

It is this necessity that the Cross of Christ meets. "He died for our sins," at once satisfying God and providing a salvation based upon

justice, so that the grace of God could flow unhindered to the needy objects of that grace.

### The Double Testimony of the Cross.

Thus, as we look upon the Cross of Calvary, we see God's recognition of the sinfulness of sin and His hatred of it, and we see also His love to the sinner and the grace that devised "means that His banished be not expelled from Him" (2 Sam. 14. 14).

Thus it is that we understand the *Divine Requirement*: "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9. 22); see in the blood of the Cross the *Divine Provision*: "This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26. 28); and enter into the simplicity of the Way of Life and the security of the *Divine Promise*: "Who-soever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10. 43).

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## A KING'S CONFESSION.

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HAVE mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight; that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest.

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free spirit: then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness.

O Lord, open Thou my lips: and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise. For Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.—*Psalm 51. 1-17.*

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