

SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF SIN

As prevalent as sin is and as tragic as its consequences are, man is lamentably incapable of comprehending the problem and is far less qualified to solve it. Every human woe is directly or indirectly due to the fact of sin. “Sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4 ASV). The supreme law is the will of God. The fact of sin and the cause of it are summed in a brief remark of Paul: “And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works.” (Col 1:21 ASV) Evil works proceed from an alienated mind, a mind poisoned with contrariness toward the will of God, and they mark the evildoer as an alien and an enemy.

The ultimate consequences of one single sin staggers the imagination, and when the number of sinners and the sum of sin are considered, it is somewhat amazing that there is any happiness or amity left on earth. It is no wonder, therefore, that a prophet of God said that “the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). “Behold, this only have I found: that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions” (Eccl. 7:29 ASV).

God alone, who has an exhaustive understanding of sin, its nature and results, is competent to solve the problem. A sick man may know nothing of the causes of his disease, its diagnosis, or its cure, and it would be extremely foolish of him to refuse treatment until he learned as much about it as a trained physician. Yet there are sin-sick humans who will not avail themselves of the only cure for sin for the reason that they do not know as much about it as God does. The competent physician knows, and the patient cooperates by faith. God knows, and the patient must humbly submit to the will of God. This is surely sensible and right.

The cure for sin is in the blood of Christ. It is revealed as a *fact* to be accepted by faith. Human philosophy lends very little aid here, and it is not a problem for the scientist and his laboratory. “For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God’s good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21 ASV). The wisdom of God surveyed the possibilities and found the one solution — the death of Christ. Had anything less than this been adequate, we may conclude it would have been resorted to. The death of Christ made it possible for God to be just and at the same time justify the believer in Christ (Rom. 3:26). Beyond this, which is clearly revealed, speculations on “the atonement” have usually led to unhappy and confusing results. “But God commendeth his

own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life; and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation” (Rom. 5:8-11 ASV). This profound statement of the ground of redemption should be humbly accepted. “Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever” (Rev. 1:5-6 ASV).

Power and merit belong to God and flow unto sin’s victims through divinely-appointed means. Man must, and can, exercise faith and any reader and believer of the word of God must know that there are conditions of faith to be performed by man. There is an apt illustration in Acts 8. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached the gospel to a multitude of sinners. We are told that the gospel is “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16-17). “But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:11-12 ASV). It is obvious that these baptized believers were saved, forgiven of all their sins. It may be depended on that all who do likewise will also be forgiven. Practically, then, here is an easy solution for the problem of sin, which is no more difficult than persuading the sinner to believe and accept it.

That none may be discouraged because of the greatness of his sin, it is recorded that even Simon, the wicked sorcerer, became a saved disciple. Some have doubted this and sought to disprove it, but unconvincingly, and obviously in defense of a false theory. It is said that “Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed” (Acts 8:13 ASV).

That Simon believed as, and what, the others did and was baptized as the others were is clear from the record. Surely, then, he availed himself of the same merciful offer of pardon the others accepted and was equally blessed. This involved nothing less than the full pardon of this guilty wretch. These aliens became citizens when their faith led them to baptism. “For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27 ASV). “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).

There is a life to be lived following the forgiveness of the sinner. He is not promised unconditional immunity throughout his life as a child of God. God has solved the problem of sin which is present in the life of the believer, and the solution involves conditions to be performed on the part of the Christian. “My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world” (1 John 2:1-2 ASV). “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8-9 ASV). Christians have constant and instant access to a throne of grace through Jesus as our High Priest.

The case of Simon sharpens this point. Simon sinned. An evil thought led him to seek to obtain the gift of God with money. He made this wicked proposition to Simon Peter and received a becoming rebuke, albeit a scathing one. He was told to repent and pray that he might be forgiven. This was not addressed to an alien, but to a baptized believer who had fallen headlong into sin. A modern preacher is doing some tragic wobbling when he applies this language of Peter to the unbaptized. “My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins” (Jas. 5:19-20 ASV). Yes, even the brethren may stand in need of conversion that they may be saved from “death.”

In Ephesians 5, Paul warns Christians against engaging in numerous sins he mentions by name. He warns them against becoming “partakers with the sons of disobedience.” He warns them that the wrath of God will surely be visited upon all such. “Let no man deceive you with empty words.” Should a false teacher come along and persuade these brethren that if they were true believers and had been once saved, they could never be lost regardless of what they did or with whom they became partakers, he would be deceiving them with “empty words.” The doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy is a deceptive theory of “empty words” which the New Testament condemns. Christians should avoid all such and devoutly accept the divine solution of the problem of sin.

Cled E. Wallace from *GospelPreceptor.com*

ANNIVERSARY

Gary and Lynda Cole, 02-14.

BIRTHDAYS

Julia Thrasher, 02-17.

ILL

Wednesday: Dee Adams, Jessica Carter, the Stillwells. Those battling cancer: Kathleen Camp's sister-in-law, Bo Marcum's sister, and Ledgia Campbell. Please remember these in your prayers, as well as: Janice Carter, Allen Scott, Kim Clark, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

AT HOME

Bob Adams is at the Del Mar Gardens, Room 229. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING

Our monthly Men's Business Meeting will be held this Sunday, February 12, 2006 following our AM worship. All men of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

SATURDAY SEMINAR

The Saturday Seminar at the 39th Street congregation will meet on February 18, 2006 at 9:30, 10:30 and 11:30 AM. The theme is: "Happiness From God." See the flyer in the foyer for details.

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 67; Sunday PM, 53; Wednesday PM, 52.

Some Thoughts To Consider:

- Temptation is not sin but playing with temptation invites sin.
- Be careful how you live your life, you may be the only Bible some people read.
- Conscience isn't noted for going along with the crowd.

Those To Serve

February 12, 2006

BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Thrasher

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... Joel Nelson
SONG LEADER..... George Thomas
OPENING PRAYER John Dodson
PRESIDE..... Ken Greer
ASSIST..... Joe Brewer
ASSIST..... John James
CLOSING PRAYER..... Jeremy Keifer

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER Myron Nebergall
CLOSING PRAYER..... Charles Tullis
LORD'S SUPPER..... Ken Greer

WEDNESDAY 15th

SONG LEADER..... Myron Nebergall
INVITATION Jeremy Keifer

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Morning Worship 10:30 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study 10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher

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