

THE LEPROSY OF ADULTERY

By N. B. Herrell

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?—(Micah 6:7).

The sin of adultery has in it the elements of free love, family infidelity, moral degeneracy, a mock modesty, illegitimacy, a propensity to crime, a social dissolution, the incubator of social diseases; it is the leprosy of the soul and the cancer of man's moral nature. It is revolting to God, the foe of Christian civilization, the destroyer of national security, and merits the wrath, not only of a sin-avenging God but of all who love and revere the hope of immortality.

"The Sin of My Soul."

The sin of adultery comes from the depths of the heart of man. It is not a physical weakness but a moral condition. It is a greater evil than murder and has its roots in the subsoil of man's fallen nature. It has the skull and crossbones of death marked on its banner and leaves death and destruction in its wake. The spirit of adultery stamps its mark upon the world's fashions and flaunts its advertisements in the places of pleasure and amusements. No amount of culture or refinement can purge this running sore of its stench or its consequences. It respects neither persons, position nor society. It is a sin of the ages and the blot of disgrace on the pages of history. It has caused thrones to crumble and nations to fall. Yet, in spite of the record we have of this sin throughout the centuries, it still exists to an alarming extent, from the slums to the pulpit. It is a moral issue and the church must take the lead in solving the problem.

Society, made up as it is of individuals, can be no better than those individuals. Adultery is a personal sin, and the Church must bear the responsibility of keeping this and all other forms of sin from entering and destroying the most glorious institution that has ever graced the earth, namely, the Church. God's penalty attached to the sin of adultery is in accord with the nature of the sin. The Church cannot treat this form of sin lightly without bringing upon herself swift and sudden destruction. The sin of adultery reveals the presence of moral corruption in its most deadly form and is the full fruition of the carnal mind. It is the dripping sore of moral leprosy eating away all hope of spiritual life and exposing the soul to eternal punishment.

"The Fruit of My Body."

The 128th Psalm gives God's promise to the father who fears Him. The second commandment covers the far reaching influence of sin in the descendants of a wicked father, which is declared to be down to the third and fourth generations. The sin of adultery has in it the element of ruthlessly branding probable offspring as illegitimate. God pity the poor child that has to pay the penalty for the father's sin. To attempt to cover this leprous spot in a child's life is only to provoke an atmosphere of whispering, nodding and pointing until time can heal the dreadful scar by three or four generations. There is no other sin, not even murder, so far-reaching in its consequences as adultery. It not only brands the offspring, but wrecks the home, the church and the school. It is the foe of society and the destroyer of nations. The first and second years after the close of the World War there were 40,000 little girls under the age of fourteen who gave birth to babies outside of wedlock. The truth of my text is borne out in these and similar cases.

"Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression?" Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp, marches

the millions of poor, innocent children to the judgment to witness against the sin of their parents. The sin of adultery is the only sin for which God grants the right of divorce among His people. The Church has no right to presume on God's mercy and pass lightly over this vicious sin, permitting it to undermine the spiritual life of its membership.

Can this Sin Be Forgiven?

Yes, there is but one sin that is unpardonable, namely, the sin against the Holy Ghost. While the sin of adultery can be forgiven, yet it will require more time to heal the wounds and scars made by it than any other one sin. Also, the effects and results of this sin are much farther-reaching than any other sin which men commit. Only for the great mercy of God, this sin would be well-nigh unpardonable, but we read, "His mercy endureth forever." Read Psalm 128.—*Herald of Holiness.*

THE REVIVAL SPIRIT NEEDED

God's people should be interested in the salvation of the lost continually. This is their normal condition. And where this spirit prevails it is bound to have its effect on sinners and get them under conviction. How sad it is when a society loses its burden for the unsaved who attend and put no special effort forth for their deliverance from sin. All the machinery of the church ought to be operated with the special end in view of building the society up in holiness and getting sinners saved. Where people are getting saved through the church's activities it brings great encouragement and inspiration to all. It is much easier to make sacrifices to carry on the work when the number of the saved increase than when the work lags and drags. Formalism breeds discouragement, and also gives a bad impression upon the unsaved. Sinners have more confidence in church people who are alive and active spiritually than they have in those who are formal and dry. It is really tragic when any church society is not filled with the Spirit and aggressive in the Lord's work.

Rev. B. T. Roberts urged the pilgrims to be in a revival state. In "Pungent Truths" the following from his pen is quoted:

So rigid was the discipline among the old Spartans that a campaign was looked upon by them in the light of a pleasant duty. So it is with every real Christian. His best days are when he is putting forth the most vigorous efforts for the salvation of men. He loves revival scenes. The cry for mercy of the convicted sinner, groaning under the load of his sins, and the shouts of the redeemed, fall like sweet music upon his ear. We are never so happy—never so raised above the world—as when God condescends to use us as his "battle axe to break in pieces the nations" of sinners, and to "destroy kingdoms" of darkness.

But a revival, to be a blessing and not a curse, must be accompanied with the purification of the church. The old Pharisees made proselytes, but they were two-fold more the children of hell than themselves. So it is with the converts of a cold, dead, formal, fashionable church. Among the old members are many who were once soundly converted, and who, when they were poor, and when their church was persecuted and despised, really enjoyed religion. These are generally, unless they are living in the secret commission of flagrant sin, sufficiently in sympathy with salvation not to oppose it very bitterly. But when unrenowned men in large numbers get into the church and take the reins of government into their hands, then the opposition to the life and power of godliness becomes too formidable to be successfully encountered. Then the sanctuary of the Most High is turned into a market-place where the right

of worshipping God is sold by auction to the highest bidder. Then fairs and festivals, pleasure rides, oyster suppers and sociables, become the order of the day. True religion is treated with ridicule, and those who enjoy it are stigmatized as fanatical or superstitious.

A genuine revival is one that leads its subjects to get right with God and man, that leads the stout-hearted to bow in humble submission at the feet of Jesus. Brother, would you enjoy a revival? Begin at once to search your own heart. Get right at any cost. Wherein you have wronged any one in his character or property, make confession and restitution to the utmost of your ability. Consecrate yourself fully to God for all coming time.

"They that turn many to righteousness [shall shine], as the stars for ever and ever." If your converts are many, it will be because you are diligent and earnest. You must do much personal work. Men do not usually flock in multitudes to the standard of the cross. They are drawn and won—one here, another there.—The Free Methodist.

A. C. DIXON'S EXPERIENCE

The late A. C. Dixon, well known American preacher, at one time pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago, and later of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, England, in one of his addresses tells of having once been drawn into one of these orders with the understanding that he was joining a mutual insurance company.

In describing the initiation, he said: "When I got inside and found presiding over the idiotic orgies, my deacon, one of the most dignified of the church, and found him putting me through that sort of proceeding,—and some of the prominent church-members with him, I felt like a fool, and I had half a conviction that they felt a little the same way."

Before the first meeting was over," said Pastor Dixon, "the Chairman of the Annual Ball Committee made a report, and informed us that the tickets for the public ball were for distribution, and each one of us were expected to distribute so many, and urge his friends to attend. 'Well, well,' I thought, 'I am in it; I never thought I would get into a thing like this.'

"So didn't have any more sense than just to get up and say, 'I am not in the habit of attending public balls, and I don't know how to sell tickets to public balls. I believe your public ball is an abomination unto heaven, and I cannot advise any of the members of my church to go.'

"I went home," said the preacher, "feeling a little twinge of conscience, and I confess I did not go to sleep quite as early as usual that night. I had gotten mixed up with unbelievers, unequally yoked. I could not manage them; they had all the yoke on their side, and they were just carrying me headlong like a blind ox yoked in with them. I could not do a thing but just kick and follow, and I did that."

Next came an invitation to a progressive euchre party, and some time later an invitation to a stag party." Pastor Dixon now wrote to the lodge secretary: "My Dear Sir,—I don't believe in your balls, and I don't believe in your progressive euchre parties, nor your stag parties; and as I cannot influence this concern for good, I offer my resignation."—*The Christian Cynosure.*

We are stewards of the gospel of Christ. As such we owe it to Him who put this trust in our hands to give the gospel to others in the same measure in which we ourselves have received it. Your tithes and offerings will carry out the demands of this stewardship. With the judgment day impending, who dares to fail in this holy trusteeship?—*Herald of Holiness.*