

## THE PASTOR'S MESSAGE

## THE REALITY OF SIN

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Having been called upon to make my contribution to the "Pastor's Column," I am offering, in condensed form, subject matter I have been considering of late, with the churches on my own field.

The subject under consideration is embraced in the words of Paul, Romans 7:13: "That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."

We understand by this statement, that it is God's purpose, through His revealed Word, to make men "sin-conscious." This is God's merciful intent and should be accepted as such. A gracious God believes it to be in the interest of mankind to thus view and regard sin. Hence, any effort on the part of man to minimize or ignore the true character of sin cannot lead to any helpful outcome.

That this has been done repeatedly, we all very well know. Men have been inclined to make a mockery of sin; to "call evil good." "White is black, and black is white, and everything goes," may be a modern slogan, but it is not a modern attitude—it is as old as the race. Destruction and Divine judgments follow hard on the heels of this attitude, however, and it is not a little strange that intelligent men have closed their eyes to this unalterable fact. Heaven knows the world has had sufficient demonstrations of the fact, but who dares say that the awful conflagration that engulfs the whole earth at the present time, is nought but the result of a generation of men who have scorned God's Word, taken sides with sin, and blasphemed the God of Heaven.

None would deny that Germany (not Hitler) is to blame for the present world cataclysm. And we have Germany to thank for a revival of spurious and blasphemous teaching, revamping the old materialistic dogma, the "Survival of the Fittest." But Germany is not entirely to blame for this unwholesome and unscriptural belief which has so influenced this present generation. Our own educationists and religionists have been much exercised in "turning the truth of God into a lie, and worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator."

When we refer to the Genesis account of the fall of man as a "legend," and incorporate in its stead a system of evolution, we have struck at the very heart of our Christian faith. We have reversed the order completely. Instead of man being a fallen creature, living under the sentence of death, depraved and guilty before an offended God; we have a glorified man, courageously and heroically fighting his way upward and onward. So far from being in dishonor he is very much in honor. God, if there be a God, cannot but behold with great delight the progress of the race. No need here for a Cross; no need here for the Christ. Get them out of the way; they are but hindrances to man's gallant effort. Man is his own saviour. So says the Modernist.

Well, out of this teaching sprang the idea of the "Superior Race." Germany believed it, and was foolish enough to act upon it. The next few years will show how mistaken she was. We thought it, and thought it so much that we were fast discarding the Book of Books, humanizing the Christ, and making a mockery of religion. I mean, generally speaking.

I heard a Protestant minister say, "Jesus needed to be born again as was the Apostle Paul. When he came to see the possibilities of the 'advanced life' He accepted the challenge and became a pioneer for truth in His day." Thus the New Birth, according to that minister's view, means only a daring to discard the old and embrace the new. That same minister went on to say, "We can better understand and interpret Jesus Christ today, than could the writers of the Four Gospels." A man who thus believes is not likely to be influenced very greatly by anything he finds in the Bible.

And this is the sort of teaching, and these are the men who are responsible for the widespread unbelief and the alarming disregard for virtue and piety that has swept the earth in the last two decades. Convince man that he is on his way up from the tad-pole stage, and that there is no authentic message from God that he can trust in, that he is not answerable to God, and you have turned loose on society a being that is capable of committing any crime that circumstances will allow for. Our youth have listened to so much atheism in our schools; our mothers and fathers have swallowed down so much fol-de-rol about permitting the youngsters to give "free expression to their inward impulses;" the moral standard has dropped so low, and the modern pulpit has been so kid-gloved, that we have well-nigh lost one generation.

It is comforting to note, however, even though our wickedness has cost the world this awful day of bloodshed, that our boys who are contending with death on land, sea, and air, are finding strength and assurance by turning to God in simple faith. Too bad, we who sent them, tried so hard to rob them of the faith that should have been theirs from their infancy. They are learning now by God's awful judgments what the Church should have been teaching men since Pentecost.

The task that lies at the door of the modern pulpit today is that of producing in one and all a "sin-consciousness." The Inspired Word of God is the Church's best means of bringing this about, and we need to begin where man fell and lost his original holiness, exposing himself to the wrath of God, and becoming a partaker of a corrupt, fallen, nature. A nature that so unqualifies man for fellowship with God that hell is his portion unless he finds a merciful pardon through the merits of Jesus Christ. It is not enough for man to say what sin is, or, what it is not, God has spoken in His Word, and in the light of the Commandment sin is made exceeding sinful.

In the first chapter of Romans (read it carefully) God leaves no doubt in our minds regarding His knowledge of sin, and man's manner of life under its dominion. It is God's awful indictment against the race. God is not personal in His charge—He is referring to the race. None are exempt, all are included. All have not committed the same acts of iniquity, but all are victims of the same malady, and the disease has only to run its course, and the depravity to which men descend is measureless.

In this chapter sin is pictured as a deliberate thing. Deliberate in its attitude against God. All the inducements are on God's side—Righteousness, Victory, Heaven. Yet sin inclines man to blind his eyes to proofs of God; to close his heart to the worship of God and

to desire even, "not to retain God in his knowledge," but to pursue a course of life that is neither satisfying nor right. Herein, is the Apostles' ground for stating that, "the carnal mind is enmity against God." It is actively godless.

Then, sin is Depraving. The picture God presents of man here shows sin to be progressive in its soul-damning work. First, man "holds the truth in unrighteousness." He has the truth, but he refuses to be influenced by it, or act upon it. Secondly, "he refuses to glorify God as God." Possessing an unthankful attitude, man becomes "vain in his imaginations, and his foolish heart becomes darkened." The next step downward is: "Professing himself to be wise, he becomes a fool." He only proves how very far from the paths of wisdom his conceited mind has carried him. He follows the course that has led thousands to a hopeless eternity, supposing that he will know naught but continued satisfaction. Thus, little by little, sin accomplishes its awful work, until given up by God, and "filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness," etc., man pursues the downward course which ends in the "Lake of Fire." Yes, sin is depraving, and in the heart of every unregenerate man potential vices lurk that will finally produce a demon, unless salvation is found through Jesus Christ. These things the Church should let men know. And know that God's unaltered Word is the authority upon which these startling facts are founded. Oh, when shall the professed Church of Christ be done with her shameful philandering and superficial dealing with sin! With sin flaunting itself on every side, with governments insulting God by their nefarious liquor selling bar-rooms, with a world on fire by hate and greed, these are days that cry for the clarion call of the old-time prophets: "PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD."

Yes, my brethren, our task today is to produce a "Sin-Consciousness" by facing men up to the Word of God. Man's sinful state, and that only, makes consistent God's plan of redemption. It gives meaning to the Incarnation—"The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." It gives meaning to Calvary—"And as it is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Moreover, the LAW entered that the OFFENCE might ABOUND, but where SIN ABOUNDED, GRACE doth much more ABOUND.

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## FALLEN PREACHERS

Mr. Wesley wrote to Alexander Mather in a letter not found in Wesley's works, but quoted by Lyerman: "No, Aleck, no! The danger of ruin to Methodism does not lie here. It springs from quite a different quarter. Our preachers, many of them, are fallen. They are not spiritual. They are not alive to God. They are soft, enervated, fearful of shame, toil, hardship. They have not the spirit which God gave to Thomas Lee at Patley Bridge, or to you at Boston. Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen. Such alone will shake the gates of hell, and set up the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth."—Selected.