

ABC's of SALVATION

by

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

ONLY THREE LETTERS

THERE is a little word of only three letters, found from Genesis to the Revelation. It is the most awful word in language—the most awful thing in the world. Its slimy tracks are found everywhere. It corrupts governments, debauches cities, and fills the world with human blood. It knows no pity and shows no mercy.

Thorns and thistles are witnesses to the fact that it is here. It is a wrecker of homes, a breaker of hearts, a digger of graves. Were it possible, it would cross the threshold of glory and hang a shroud over the Light in the midst of the Throne and then go down and start a graveyard by the River of Life.

You know this word of only three letters—it is S-I-N. Let us note some things about this terrible thing.

I. What Is Sin?

This is a simple question, but it is like a house of many rooms. We must not listen to man's definition but seek the definition found in the Word of God.

Turning to this source we find there are seven such definitions—two by Solomon, two by James, two by John, and one by Paul.

- In Proverbs 21:4, pride and vanity are said to be sin;
- In Proverbs 24:9, wrong thoughts are said to be sin;
- In James 2:9, to have respect to certain persons to the exclusion of others is said to be sin;
- In James 4:17, not living up to the light we have is said to be sin;
- In I John 3:4, breaking the law of God is said to be sin;
- In I John 5:17, all unrighteousness is said to be sin;
- In Romans 3:23, coming short of the requirements of God is said to be sin.

This latter definition is the common use of the word.

It was this failure that brought wreck and ruin to the race by our "first parents. God had a mark—a standard; they missed this standard with all the sad consequences which followed.

II. The Fascination of Sin

The enemy of God held out fascinating blandishments before the eyes of the mother of the race in the garden. The same tactics are still used. The rattlesnake is one of the most dreaded reptiles, yet it possesses the power of fascination. Birds have been seen to circle above it, each circle getting smaller and bringing them nearer the dreaded object; finally they would drop into its jaws. Is not this a faint picture of that terrible thing which God's Word calls sin? The prophet Ezekiel cries, "**Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?**" Yet countless millions are on the road to eternal destruction due to the fascination of sin.

III. The Pleasures of Sin

Anything that fascinates has some pleasures attached to it. In Hebrews 11:24,25 it is written, "**By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.**"

He could have had the pleasure of sitting upon the throne of the world's most powerful dynasty of that time. Who would dare to say that there would have been no pleasure in this? Like other monarchs, he could have built for himself endearing and lasting monuments. He might have turned his thoughts to less vain and more legitimate things, yet they would have been sin to him, for he knew God had a purpose and plan for him. To have done less than he did would have been "**missing the mark**" set for him by God.

Had he followed the "**pleasures of sin for a season,**" his mummified body, no doubt, would today be in some tomb covered by the shifting sands of the centuries. Because of his decision, fifteen centuries later he was permitted to stand in a body of glory on Transfiguration's Mount and talk with the Eternal Son of God.

IV. The Deceitfulness of Sin

"It is pleasant floating," said the young man in a boat which was rapidly approaching a terrible precipice of which he was unaware.

I am writing these notes in a mountain town of North Carolina where hundreds of people come for the summer. Here a number of people are suffering from a skin poisoning due to a certain plant. The beauty of the plant makes it deceptive. How deceptive is sin!

The governor of the wedding feast at Cana announced a law so applicable to sin when he said,

"Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse."

This is the law that operates in the realm of sin.

It puts forth first the cup that exhilarates, then the cup that stupefies, then when strength is gone and one is no longer able to push it away, sin put to the lips the dregs. The rich man in hades was drinking the dregs of the cup that first exhilarated. That is the deceitfulness of sin.

V. The Slavery of Sin

The children of slave parents were born slaves. Some years ago I read of a triple execution in a western state. Three brothers were dangling at the end of ropes. While this scene was being enacted, a drunken old man staggered up against the dangling bodies.

A preacher, who had followed the three brothers to the gallows, said to the sheriff, "Sheriff, arrest that man—do not let him further disgrace this terrible scene." The sheriff answered, "Let him alone, he is reaping what he sowed." He was the father of the three executed men. Parents transmit to their children by the first birth that old sinful nature which brings forth the fruit of sins.

Yet think of the tens of thousands of parents who never think of the necessity of the "new birth" on the part of themselves and their children. Father, mother, your child was born in sin!

May God move you to see the need of deliverance from this terrible slavery! This can only be done by the new birth. What are you doing to assist that child you brought into the world to see the need of this new birth?

VI. The Wages of Sin

All countries have a currency. In this country it is gold and silver, or the equivalent. In some countries it may be salt or rice, but all have a currency. The land of the doomed and the damned has its currency with which it always pays its debts. The Word of God says, "**The wages of sin is death.**"

The sinner receives his wages from a taskmaster who never defrauds him of a single penny. This taskmaster is punctual as to payday and honest in his payoff—he gives exactly what he promised. He is even charitable for he gives bonuses to your unborn children.

- Sin killed the prophets of God, caused the Son of Man to be born in a stable, and dogged His footsteps from the cradle to the cross.
- Sin plunged the spear into His side and caused Him to hang His dying head upon His breast.
- Sin stoned Stephen to death, and, according to tradition, crucified Peter, and beheaded Paul.

But why go on any further. All one needs to do is to look at the cemeteries of the world; they are the mute evidences that "**The wages of sin is death.**"

VII. The Remedy

You must find someone who is able to remove the sentence—One willing to receive the wages due you. Thank God, that One has been found! Listen to the words of Divine revelation:

- **“He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed”** (Isaiah 53:5).
- **“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree”** (I Peter 2:24).
- **“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”** (I John 1:7).

There is a fountain filed with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

~ end of chapter 15 ~

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