



# SIN AND SINS.

BY

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"WHAT SHALL WE SAY THEN? SHALL WE CONTINUE IN SIN, THAT GRACE MAY ABOUND? GOD FORBID. HOW SHALL WE, THAT ARE DEAD TO SIN, LIVE ANY LONGER THEREIN?"

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*Rom. vi. 1, 2.*

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It is of all importance for us, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, to distinguish between *sin* and *sins*. The one is the nature of evil in us, and the other is the fruit of that nature in our acts. From the one we need *deliverance*; for the other we need *forgiveness*.

The first thing that troubles a divinely quickened soul is *sins*—that consciousness of guilt before God that brings on the conscience the fear of condemnation. The more the Word of God deals with the conscience, the more miserable the person becomes. The thoughts, feelings, words, and acts, as seen in the light of God's presence, are all viewed as *sins*; and the dread of the final judgment of God increases upon the soul, as the number and enormity of these sins is recognized by the conscience. The sense of guilt before God becomes extreme, and the soul now realizes its hopelessly lost condition, and cries out for mercy.

God is before the mind as a *Judge*, and the only hope the person has is in His mercy. "God be merciful to me a sinner," is all such a one feels able to say. He pleads guilty—confesses sins, and asks for pardon. *Forgiveness of sins* is the one deep need of the soul, for conviction is complete. It is here that the work of Christ for the sinner, as having on the cross borne his *sins*, comes in—"Whom God hath set forth a mercy-seat through faith in His *blood*" (Rom. iii. 25), the One "who His own self bare our *sins* in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter ii. 24), and the One "in whom we *have* redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of *sins*." (Col. i. 14.) Christ's work being thus accepted before God as the ground of pardon, the Spirit of God clears the conscience according to the value of the *blood* of Christ; and with this, on the authority of God's Word, comes the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, and also of salvation, as stated in Luke—"To give knowledge of salvation unto His people, by the remission of their sins." (Luke i. 77.)

Sins having passed from the conscience through this application of the blood of

Christ, the fear of judgment is completely gone, and the person rejoices in a present salvation. Joy takes the place of the previous misery, and there is "peace with God." (Rom. v. 1.)

The question of *sins* is settled, and while this joy of salvation continues all goes well; but soon another trouble overtakes the soul, and the joy dies down, at least in measure, and after a while completely. The forgiveness of sins is retained, and there is no fear of ultimate judgment, yet the soul is in misery and distress. Conscience is again at work, but this time not about *sins*, but about *sin*. The *sins* are all seen to be gone in the blood of Christ; but, alas! the *sin*—the evil nature—is still felt to be working in the heart, and, do what it will, the soul finds that nothing keeps it in check. God is before the soul, not now as a Judge, but in His holiness, and as One to be loved and served. Conscience—the soul being under law—keeps saying, "Do this" and "Do not do that," while at the same time it convicts the soul of doing the very opposite of what ought to be done. The love of God moves in the heart, giving increasingly the desire

to please Him, and yet every attempt to do so fails. (Rom. vii. 18, 19.)

The holiness of God works powerfully in the soul, and the hatred of sin is intense. Every energy is put forth to overcome sin, and develop what is good, until at last the discovery is made that there is *nothing* but sin there, and together with this the bitter conviction of being helplessly captive under sin takes possession of the soul ; “I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” (Rom. vii. 23.) What is wanted now is *deliverance from sin*.

When *sins* simply were in question, forgiveness seemed the one and only thing required to give complete happiness ; but *sin* is now the trouble, and the sense of forgiveness gives no relief. Indeed it only makes the bitterness of sin more felt, because the sense of forgiveness fills the heart with gratitude, and supplies the deepest possible motive not to sin ; but this gives no power to rise above sin ; it only makes sin as an active thing the more intolerable. Deliverance from the *power* of

sin alone can bring relief now, and under legal efforts to do good only complete captivity to sin is the state arrived at. During all this process under law to attain holiness self has been looked to—it has been I, I, I, all along; rent with agony, the cry goes up to God, “O wretched man that I am! who shall *deliver* me from the body of this death?” (Rom. vii. 24.)

The Spirit of God answers this cry for deliverance by presenting Christ to the soul, not now as bearing *sins*, but as having died for *sin*. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and *for sin*, condemned *sin* in the flesh” (Romans viii. 3); and with this it learns that in Christ’s death to sin, as having died with Him when He died, the believer himself has died to sin, not as an experience, but as a fact, that faith receives and rests on. This knowledge gives relief; and then, with the experimental sense of real deliverance, because faith in Christ and His work is now carrying the soul, comes the exultant note of praise, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans vii. 25.)

A deep, calm joy takes possession of the heart, and the soul now rests in Christ risen from the dead, having learned the truth of *its own death and resurrection* with Christ. It is no longer, "I am this, and I will do that," but "Christ has done that, and Christ is this." Not only that, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," but that "the law of the Spirit of *life in Christ Jesus* hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

For the uninterrupted enjoyment of this deliverance two things are needed—the constant reckoning by faith of ourselves "dead indeed unto sin" (Rom. vi. 11), as having *died* with Christ; and the realization by faith of being in Christ in a new life, where sin is not, as having the "Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 2.)

May the Lord in His goodness give all our readers to know, through the simple testimony of His Word, not only the difference between *sin* and *sins*, but with this knowledge the enjoyment by faith of *deliverance from sin* as well as *forgiveness of sins*.

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