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THE WAGES OF SIN

No. 11

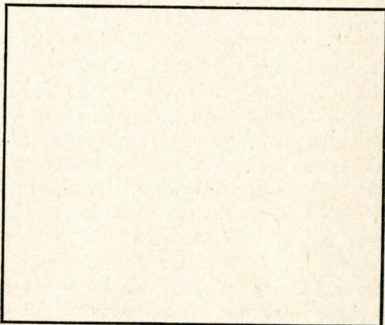
of

The Gospel Tract Series

By Eugene S. Smith

Des Moines 3, Iowa

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THE WAGES OF SIN

No. 11 of The Gospel Tract Series

“For the wages of sin is death,” said Paul in **Rom. 6:23**. The contemplation of this is horrible beyond description but nevertheless it must be studied. It was the wise man Solomon who said, “The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom” (**Prov. 9:10**). Therefore, as we contemplate God’s punishment for sin we are led in the way of wisdom and acquiring knowledge which is of God and will be able to escape the punishment and the penalty for sin.

To the first man and woman God said, “But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof **thou shalt surely die**” (**Gen 2:17**). They disobeyed God’s commandment and suffered God’s penalty for their sin. They were separated from God for their transgression of His law.

Death is separation. That is the literal meaning of the term. In the day that Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit they were separated from God because He withdrew His presence from the garden and walked no more with them. Since that time “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (**Rom. 3:23**). We are not dead in sin because our forefathers sinned but we are dead in sin because we have sinned. By these sins we have maintained the wall between ourselves and God.

The Second Death

However the separation between man and God which now maintains is not the final punishment for sin. As we live in the world we lose much through the separation from God's fellowship that now exists but it is as nothing compared to that which is to come. One day we must stand before the judgment throne and in that day there will be another and a final separation from God. In that day all who have continued in sin will be eternally separated from God and His love. In this separation or death there will be consciousness and memory but there will be no opportunity of repentance or redemption. This is the second death or man's second separation from God.

Neither will the ages of that separation be spent in comparative comfort as are the years we live in this world. Here we have many pleasures to enjoy and the goodness of God still o'er-shadows us in many ways. When the second death or separation from God takes place all who suffer it must be consigned to an eternal lake of fire and brimstone. Here they must suffer for all eternity as punishment for the sin in which they lived and from which they would not will to escape.

A Way of Escape

Though we now live in sin and by sin are separated from God we have the

opportunity to escape the condemnation of sin. We can here and now lay hold on the redemption that God has offered us in Christ Jesus that we may not come into the second death. Therefore, it is not to be thought that God hates any man or wills the condemnation of any man. God loves you and He loves me, He loves every man and has shown that love by giving His Son to die that we might live. If we come into the second death and are lost for eternity it is because we have disregarded His love and failed to avail ourselves of the life He has offered to us in His Son the Christ.

Christ came to this earth and suffered in our stead. He paid the penalty for our sins since "Him who knew no sin He made sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. 5:21). Christ, the guiltless one went to the cross, as the guilty one, that the penalty might be paid for our sin. In Him we can have this redemption and salvation if we will but lay hold on it.

In and by His suffering He was perfected and Paul says, "Though He was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:8, 9). As therefore man lost his place in God's favor through disobedience he can regain that place through obedience.

However, this obedience is twofold. First there was the obedience of Christ as He endured the cross for us and second, there is our obedience that He may be the author of salvation to us. Thus in obedience we escape the second death and enter life as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord and our Savior.

Our Obedience

Christ has commanded that we first of all believe in Him. He says, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1). This faith is essential for Jesus further said, "Except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24). Paul said, "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6), so faith is the first essential in our obedience to the will of God.

The believer must then repent of his sins and confess his faith in Christ. He has said, "Except ye repent ye shall all in like manner perish" (Luke 13:3). Further he said, "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven (Matt. 10:32). Therefore, it is evident that to obey Christ we must repent and confess the faith of our hearts, that is, confess that we believe that He is the son of God.

Having done these things we are to be baptized for Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). The apostle Peter said that we are "baptized unto the remis-

sion of sins" (Acts 2:38), and again that "baptism doth also now save you" (I Peter 3:21). Therefore, it is by baptism that we are translated into Christ and in Him find peace and safety from the guilt and consequence of our sins.

The Haven of Rest

Let us then in wisdom recognize the fact that God is going to punish sin and that all who remain in sin must endure this punishment for all eternity. Knowing this let us in wisdom flee from the wrath of God in the way that He has said we should flee. Let us in obedience to the Christ secure Him as the refuge for our souls, the author of our salvation. He is the only one who can offer protection from the wrath of God which is revealed against sin and unrighteousness. Let us then know His love and find in Him that perfect peace which passeth all understanding.

Christ is our haven of rest and those in Him are saved and safe from the storms of God's wrath which shall finally break upon this world. In Him there is life and hope for "The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 3:23).

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