

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH

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THE WAGES OF SIN

BY: C. D. COLE

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," Romans 6:23.

Introduction: This text points out a three-fold contrast: Sin is contrasted with God; wages is contrasted with gift; and death is contrasted with eternal life. Sin is a paymaster; God is a giver. Sin pays wages; Sin's wages is death; God's gift is eternal life.

SIN AS A TASKMASTER

A taskmaster is one who assigns work to another and sees that the work is done. The Egyptians set cruel taskmasters over the Israelites who assigned heavy and unreasonable tasks and then whipped them if they did not do them. The Bible represents the sinner as the servant of sin. When the Jews said, *"We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man..."* Jesus answered them, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin,"* John 8:33-34. The worst slavery is slavery to sin.

Sin is a cruel taskmaster. He gets his servant to work early in life. In the government of sin there is no child-labor law. Why do little boys smoke and curse? Because they are servants of sin. Why do girls smoke and drink and disobey parents? Because they are slaves of sin. They do not belong to themselves. They are in bondage to sin.

Sin works men and women of all ages. Why does the gambler buy lottery tickets with the money that ought to be spent for bread for wife and children? He is sin's slave. He does sin's bidding. What is the explanation of the drunkard's

life? Why will a man take money needed for groceries and spend it for booze? It is because he is the servant of sin. Why are the amusement places of this world filled while the churches suffer from small crowds? It is because most of the people are lost and in the employment of sin. Why can hell holes get the people's money while the cause of Christ counts its pennies and nickels? It is because this world lieth in the lap of the wicked one. Men do not belong to themselves. They are tied hand and foot by the cords of sin. A slave does not have freedom. He carries out the orders of another; he must do what his owner says. *"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin,"* John 8:34.

"For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins," Proverbs 5:21, 22. What a picture! Man is here seen bound by his own iniquities. Sin ties a man up.

In *Gulliver's Travels* we are told the story of his journey to a land where the people were no larger than his little finger. Being tired after his long journey, and seeing no one near, he lay down upon the grass and went to sleep. When he awoke he found he was tied down, hand and foot. The little people into whose land he had come, fearing he might harm them, had driven small pegs in the ground and roped him down. The ropes were hardly stronger than threads, but they had tied so many of them about him that he was utterly helpless.

You see it is easy to break one strand

of thread. Wind one strand around my wrists and I jerk; and it is broken. Wind it five times about my wrists, a little harder jerk and it still breaks. But now wind it around my wrists 30 or 40 times, and then I jerk but it does not break.

It is so with our sins. Some boy or girl tells a story. It doesn't seem so bad, we just call it a "fib." But he tells another, and another, and on and on until he is a liar. A man takes a drink, and another, and another until he is its slave.

Sin is a hard taskmaster. He has no retirement plan for old sinners. He works them after they get old and bent. He drives them on and on in his nefarious business even as they totter toward the grave. Sin has no respect for gray hairs. Sin has no pity for the weak. Sin has no remorse of conscience. Sin has no sympathy for the miserable.

Look at that old man yonder. He is godless and indifferent to the things of God and eternity. He rarely ever goes to church. Christ is nothing to him. His god is his belly or his business or pleasure. He is still trying to get hold of some more money to spend at sin's joints or to buy another piece of land with, or to fatten his bank roll. He drinks God's water and breathes God's air, but he hates God's church and despises God's people. What is the explanation of such a life? He is in the employment of sin. Sin is pressing the yoke heavily on his neck, and in a little while he will be in

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UNUSED SCRIPTURES

BY: C. D. COLE

Introduction: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," II Timothy 3:16. A divine Bible given for human good. It is profitable for four things: teaching; reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness.

TEACHING

All moral truth we need to know is in this Bible. It is wrong to go outside this Bible for any thing of a religious nature.

REPROOF

Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. There is a ministry of rebuke, but it must come from this book and not out of a prejudiced and hateful heart. No pastor should ever reprove anybody just to get something off his chest or to show personal hate and prejudice.

CORRECTION

Who among us does not need correcting? We all need correcting but few take correction.

INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

Where will I find out how to live? How may I know what I can or may do? Do I have any guide book on righteousness or is it left up to me? Who determines for me what is right and wrong? That is the purpose of this Bible.

Now, in the light of this Scripture, no Scripture is to be shunned. Every doctrine is essential. I think it can be safely charged that many Scripture are ignored and many doctrines denied. Some preachers preach a lifetime and never do anything with some Scripture but ignore them, and never do anything with some doctrines but deny them. I want to call your attention to some of these Scriptures that are so generally denied:

Those that describe the state of the lost sinner. The natural man is set forth in Scripture in many aspects of his condition: Dead: "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, [by grace ye are saved];" Ephesians

2:5. Blind: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John 3:3. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," I Corinthians 2:14. Moral blindness is mental blindness, or ignorance. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved," Romans 10:1. Hater of God: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Romans 8:7. Unable to please God: "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God," Romans 8:8. Man has a free will, but the will has no moral ability; it is free only to act according to its nature. Man of himself can product sin, but he cannot of himself product holiness. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," Philippians 1:6. Can death create life? Can blindness cure itself? Can the hater of God reverse his nature and love God?

Those that speak of the work of Christ as a success. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities," Isaiah 53:11.

Notice that all authority has been given Him. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth", Matthew 28:18. "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him," John 17:2. He exercised that authority by commanding us and by giving eternal life to all those given Him by the Father.

Observe that a people have been given Him to be saved. And these people will certainly be saved. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out...And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath

given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day," John 6:37, 39. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me," John 12:32.

When His word is preached He sees to it that it does not fail to accomplish His will. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it," Isaiah 55:10, 11. Christ is behind His word and we never labor in vain in preaching it. Preaching is a success if we preach the word. Nor our success, but His success. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord," I Corinthians 15:58. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?...I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase," I Corinthians 3:5, 6.

Those that speak of the work of the Spirit as effectual. There are two calls spoken of in the Scripture; the general and the effectual. Wherever the gospel is preached God is calling sinners and they ought to accept the call; they are responsible for not heeding it. "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded," Proverbs 1:23, 24. But a mere outward invitation is not enough. It would be if men were in love with God. There must be a special, effectual call of the Holy Spirit. He who studies the Spirit will see that there is a call spoken of that is more than a mere outward invitation to come to Christ. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," Romans 8:28. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save

them that believe," I Corinthians 1:22.

Those that speak of conversion as the work of God. We think of conversion as an experience of grace, that which happens within a person when he passes from death unto life. It is the change wrought in him mind and heart in salvation. From the divine side this work is regeneration and from the human side it is repentance and faith. Now repentance and faith are said to be gifts of God. *"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins,"* Acts 5:31. *"When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life,"* Acts 11:18. *"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth,"* II Timothy 2:24, 25.

These are unpopular doctrines here and now, but no preacher will be sorry he preached them when he stands to be judged, provided he has not ignored other Scriptures in preaching them. These Scriptures are profitable; they begin in the saint the spirit of humility and cause him to ascribe his conversion to God.

If we deny a doctrine we will naturally ignore the Scriptures that treat of that doctrine. Those who deny election never use the Scriptures that deal with the doctrine. A young man recently said that predestination makes dogs of us. Shame on a preacher for such a statement; the Bible says predestination is unto eternal life, it rather makes saints of us.

The Wages of Sin

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sin's grave, and after a longer while he will be in the devil's hell; unless the grace of God teaches his heart to fear and opens his eyes to see the Lamb of God.

SIN AS A PAYMASTER

Sin pays off; it pays a man what he

earns. Sin pays wages. Men are concerned about wages. They argue over wages; strike; fight. Men want what they earn. To get what one earns is justice. The wages of sin is death; that's justice.

SIN PAYS DECEITFUL WAGES

Death is not what sin promises, but God says death is what sin pays. Sin promises pleasure and happiness and good, but it pays off in different coin. Men sin because they think there will be good in it. Men drink for the good feeling; he gambles for the money he thinks he will earn. Sin doesn't come to a man and say, "If you will do this or that I will pay you off in death." Sin says in doing this or that you will be profited; there will be pleasure or satisfaction or happiness.

Even in the garden of Eden *"the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened..."* Genesis 3:4-7. There is no abiding pleasure in sin. *"Pleasures of sin for a season,"* Hebrews 11:25.

SIN'S WAGES IS DEATH

What is death? Death used in several different senses. It never means non-existent. Death and life are not synonyms for existence or non-existence but for states or conditions of existence.

There is physical death, which means separation of the visible from the invisible part of man. Then there is death in the moral or judicial sense, which means moral separation from God. We speak of the sinner as being at a guilty distance from God; *"who were dead in trespasses and sins,"* Ephesians 2:1.

There is only one physical death. *"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment,"* Hebrews 9:27. *"Let the dead bury their dead,"* Matthew 8:22.

But morally there is a first and second death; a present and future tense of death. The sinner is now dead, which means that he is separated from the favor and blessings of God, under the curse of His law. The second death is the lake of fire, where the curse of the law is executed. Come to the day of judgment. Come to the sin's pay window and get sin's pay envelope. Open it and see what is in it. Horror of horrors!

"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matthew 25:41. *"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire,"* Revelation 20:13-15.

THE GIFT OF GOD

God gives a gift. The value of a gift does not depend upon any service rendered but upon the ability and generosity of the giver. What a great giver is God. A king once remembered one of his generals with a valuable gift. The soldier said to his king, this is too great for me to accept. The king replied, but it is not too great for a king to give. Men who go to hell get what they earned, but heaven is God's gift to paupers.

GOD GIVES ETERNAL LIFE

Just as there are two aspects of death, so are there two aspects of eternal life; a present and a future. The believer now has eternal life, the very moment he believes. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,"* John 3:16. *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life..."* John 3:36. He is not condemned; he is redeemed from the curse; he has justification or life. But just as the living sinner does not experience death in its fullest sense, so the living believer does not have eternal life in its fullest sense. Eternal life will have a fuller and sweeter meaning when we awake in His likeness; when we are conformed to the image of God's son; when we reach our inheritance beyond the skies.

ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

No man can have eternal life without taking Christ. Eternal life means right relationship to God. *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God..."* I Peter 3:18. The road back to God's favor is paved with the stones of Christ's obedience and cemented by the blood of the Cross. *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,"* John 14:6.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," Romans 6:23.