

THE SIN UNTO DEATH IN THE GOSPEL AGE

We have treated the subject of the second death above, from the standpoint of the next age entirely, applying it only to those who, during the next age, will first be actually set free from the dominion of the Adamic death, and then, by willful sin, bring death upon themselves – the second death. But it is used in Scripture with reference to this Gospel Age also. Now, those who have an ear to hear, and who believe God's Word, are informed of his purpose to bring all men to life again through the resurrection, and it is our privilege to anticipate that perfect, or restored and sinless condition of the next age now. By faith in God's Word and power, we reckon ourselves and are reckoned of God, as justified freely from all sin – no longer under the Adamic curse, but free from all the curse of Adam's sin, and from its penalty – death. By faith we see Jesus to be the full satisfaction of the claims of justice. Thus we reckon ourselves as alive from the dead. Death had passed upon all, and upon us among others; but now we know that we were bought with a price, and we think of ourselves as free from Adamic death – as human beings having perfect life again.

But this is all an imputed or reckoned perfection – not actual. It is so reckoned by God and by ourselves, because of the efficacy of the ransom price. It is by faith only, that we realize it – we believe God that our life has been ransomed by him who gave himself a ransom for all. So far as sight goes, we have no evidence of a restored right to life. Aches and pains and death continue with us, as with others, but "we walk by faith, and not by sight." Do you ask, what good the knowledge does us, since we experience no physical benefits more than the worldly? We reply, the knowledge of our redemption is valuable; it gives us hope and joy; it enables us to come to God as

our reconciled parent – reconciled 1800 years ago by the death of his son – reconciled while we were enemies and sinners. Thus it opens up communion and intercourse between us and our Heavenly Father. But more; when we come into communion with God, he tells us of his plans, and he [R382 : page 5] offers to make us co-workers with him if we prove ourselves worthy of so great a privilege. To prove ourselves worthy of being co-workers with him, we must consecrate ourselves to death, and follow the example of Jesus, presenting our bodies living sacrifices to God.

We must become dead to the world and to all its earthly ambitions, honors, etc. If we do so, we thus consecrate ourselves to the second death. How? In this way: With all others, we were subject to and already under the dominion of the first or Adamic death. (Don't forget that all our steps since are steps of faith – walking by faith and not by sight. What we receive and do by faith, is counted as instead of the actual.) Thus we became free from Adamic sin and its penalty – death. Then, by faith, we gave our justified humanity a living sacrifice to God. When the sacrifice ends, we will be dead – "Be thou faithful unto death." When such justified and consecrated ones die, it is their second death. Now, hear Jesus' words: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life...He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

Does not this teach us that some will, and some will not be hurt, by passing into the second death? The overcomers of this age will not be hurt by it. Nay, they will be benefited by it. Jesus, we are told, took our human nature in order to die for us, and when he laid it down in death – a sacrifice to God – the human nature was gone forever, but he was born from the dead, of the Spirit, and in his resurrection was perfected in the Divine nature and likeness. What the sacrifice of Jesus did for him (Phil. 2:8,9), our sacrifice is to do for us. Unless we

lay down the human nature in complete sacrifice – even unto death – we cannot become partakers or sharers of the Divine nature.

Jesus did not die the second death, because he was not under the Adamic penalty. We were of the condemned race, and being justified by his ransom, we become sharers in HIS death, which was not the Adamic. Thus we shared by nature in the Adamic death, from which we flee, and rejoice to be delivered; but we seek and rejoice to be "dead with him" that we may also "live with him" on a higher than human plane of being. (Rom. 6:8; and 2 Pet. 1:4; Phil. 3:10.) Thus we prefer to sacrifice our humanity because of our faith in God's promise of a higher nature, rather than to share with our human father, Adam, a restitution to the perfection of human nature.

Ah, yes, we can thus see a force and depth in Jesus' words: "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." But there are some who will be hurt – badly hurt by the second death – it will be to such, the end of all life and hope and being – everlasting death. We have seen the class who will thus die in the end of the Millennial Age – for their own sins; now, let us look at a class who, during this Gospel Age, die the second death, and will have no resurrection from it. This class is spoken of in 1 John 5:16. There are sins not unto death, and there is a sin unto death; I do not say that ye should pray for it. The Apostle is not referring to the Adamic sin and death, **[R383 : page 5]** for it passed on all. Consequently, he must have reference to an individual sin and its penalty – the second death. As he does not define what the sin is, we will seek further light on the subject. But here we remark that this sin could be committed in this age, only by one who had been justified by faith from the Adamic sin and death, for they could not die for their own sin until they had been reckoned free from the Adamic penalty.

Paul gives us a description of the sin unto death, and shows us that none could commit it (now) but those who have been justified

and consecrated themselves. The Apostles could commit it; we could commit it, or any one who has already enjoyed by faith, all the blessings due him as a member of the redeemed race. Paul says: (Heb. 10:26, Diaglott) "If WE should voluntarily sin AFTER having received the knowledge of the truth (a thorough understanding), there is no longer a sacrifice left for sins." [The share of such, in the sacrifice of Jesus, is exhausted – he died to redeem and liberate us from Adamic sin and its penalty, which came upon us without our will or choice: His sacrifice is abundant to cover every weakness and imperfection arising in any way from that source; but his ransom does not cover our willful or determined sin.]

Voluntary sin does not mean the relapse for a time, through the weakness of our will power, into what we now see to be sinful; but, as explained by the context, it is an open apostasy – an ignoring of their share in the sacrifice. Verse 29 describes the willful sinner against light, as "having trampled on the Son of God, and esteemed as a common thing [lightly esteemed] the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and insulted the spirit of favor."

As to what is meant here by trampling on the Son of God and esteeming his blood a common thing, we leave to the reader to decide for himself. The only way in which we can conceive of this being done, is a method now springing into popularity; namely, the disclaiming of the necessity of Jesus' death as our ransom price from the just penalty of sin – death. Sin is a reality, its penalty – death – is a reality, and a release from it is obtained only by the giving of an equivalent for us. This was done by him "who loved us and gave himself for us" – "For ye were redeemed not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." Those who realize themselves bought with this price, value the blood, or sacrificed life of Jesus as "precious"; while those who claim that we are not thus redeemed or purchased out of death, set aside the value

of Jesus' death, and count it as the death of any one else – a "common" or ordinary thing, which paid no penalty for us.

This view, that Adam's sin needed no atoning for, other than man can give, and hence that Jesus' death purchased no release, has long been held by Universalists, Unitarians, and others, but the force of the text quoted, is not applicable to those who never saw the value of Christ's ransom. It refers to a class who, having once seen its value, and been sanctified thereby, turn about and begin to underrate its value and esteem it a common thing. "My soul come not thou into their secret."

Here we see who can in this age sin (individually) the sin unto death – the second death. It is not the poor blasphemous wretch steeped in sin and death, who has never yet tasted that the Lord is gracious; nor the ignorant religious professor who loves and serves mammon, and knows God only enough to fear him; but it is the well enlightened, who were once partakers of the spirit of adoption – the spirit of Christ – and who have been sanctified or consecrated. These only can now commit a sin unto death – it will be their second death, since by faith they had been justified and released from the condemnation of the first, the Adamic death. We expect no resurrection for these. The same Apostle, speaking of this class elsewhere, (Heb. 6:4-6) indicates that, having taken this step of willful sin, it is impossible to move them to repentance afterward. This class, like a similar class in the next age, will be badly hurt of the second death – They lose all.

Peter says of such – "If, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ (their ransom), they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness." (2 Pet. 2:20-22.)