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**THE GREAT PERIL.**

A missionary from Anhui writes: Some time ago they wanted a place to hold a local assembly. It was proposed to use a temple for the purpose, but the idol was in the way. Mr. Hu, one of the village leaders, said, "Take it out and throw it into the river." Some objected that the idol might be angry and make trouble, but Hu said: "If he wants to make trouble let him come to my house and make it; I am not afraid," and into the river the idol went. Now the temple is empty. Is it not like the story of the devil that went out, and, coming back to an empty house, brought back seven others worse than himself? The Chinese heart is very rapidly being emptied of the old superstitions, more rapidly, indeed, than we can fill it with the love of God, which is the only thing that will keep it from welcoming an atheism that is worse even than heathenism.

**THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH.**

The terrible penalty for sin, says the apostle in the first chapter of Romans, is not the pain it brings in the way of retribution. For indeed all pain has a tendency to purge; all retribution is merciful and indeed loving. No; the terrible penalty of our sin is—its consequences. The loss it brings to us—the narrow life, the darkened conscience, the ability to be satisfied with the life of the senses, the dying out of the soul, the awful retreat and final departure of the very faculty by which we know our selves to be something other than the brute that perisheth. That in St Paul's view is the wages of sin—not punishment, but death. And so, in that chapter, speaking of the consequences of wrong ways of living, he uses such phrases as these: "Men received in themselves that recompense of their error which was due." "Even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."

And again he says that by persisting in their evil courses men become "past feeling." They lose even their natural affection, and at last become not merely ignorant of God, but actually "haters of God."—Condensed from At Close Quarters, by John A. Barker.



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