

## Whatever Became Of Sin?

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by Bill Crews

**O**n the one hand, we have God in His revealed word (the Bible) telling us that man is a creature of God (**Genesis 2:7**) who has been made in the image of God (**Genesis 1:26-27**). Man is portrayed as a creature of intellect and will and conscience, able to reason and understand, able to choose and purpose, able to know right from wrong, responsible for his decisions and choices, answerable for his conduct.

Yes, he is influenced by his environment; yes, he can be deceived and misled; yes, he can deceive and mislead. But he is accountable; he is teachable; he has a conscience; he can determine and change the direction of his life. There is such a distinction as right and wrong; there is such a thing as **sin** – *transgression of God's will*. Man can sin against God; man can wrong his fellow-man; man can fail his duties. But man can be convicted of his sins; man can repent; man can be forgiven by God; man can reform his life. The nature of man; the existence of the Bible; the life and death and resurrection of Jesus; the revelation of the gospel all argue for the above.

On the other hand, we have “learned men,” men wise in their own conceits, arguing that the universe and all in it just chanced to be, that man just happened to evolve, that there is no Supreme Being, that there is no set standard of right or wrong, that man has no conscience (except in his imagination) and should have no sense of “ought” or feelings of guilt about himself or his conduct.

They argue that standards are merely what others – men in general, or society – have decreed to be right or wrong. They “reason” that every individual is merely the product of his physical evolution and make-up and the result of the environment in which he has been cast. Such men do not talk about “sin” or “righteousness,” but about “behavior,” unacceptable and acceptable. They do not believe in punishment because they do not believe in crime (that anything is really a “crime”). The criminal is not classed or treated as a criminal. He is told, in effect, “It wasn't your fault. You couldn't help it. You are not to be blamed. We will try to treat you or help you.”

Fortunately, all psychologists and psychiatrists do not take these positions. Dr. Karl Menninger has been called, “one of America's greatest psychiatrists” and has been given credit for pioneering psychiatry in this country. More than twenty-eight years ago Dr. Menninger came out with a book he called, “*Whatever Became of Sin?*” in which he took the position: “**There is ‘sin’ ... which cannot be subsumed under verbal artifacts such as ‘disease,’ ‘delinquency,’ ‘deviancy.’ There is immorality. There is unethical behavior. There is wrongdoing.**” He also wrote: “If the concept of personal responsibility and answerability for ourselves and for others were to return to common acceptance, hope would return to the world with it.” But the Bible says it a lot better and a lot stronger, and it has been saying it for centuries. Man can not only choose to do better and be better; he has God to help him and forgive him.

Sin is alive and well, but so is the grace of God. Men may think they have found a way to free the guilty from blame, but they have only succeeded in glossing over sin, encouraging more of it, and dashing hope in the hearts of those who need it the most. Yes there is such a thing as sin, and every accountable person becomes guilty of it. But, thank God, there is such a thing as conviction of sin, and godly sorrow, and repentance, and restitution, and forgiveness, and reformation.

361002