

## The Painted Mask.



**L**OOK now at sin. Pluck off that painted mask, and turn upon her painted face the lamp of God's Word. We start—it reveals a death's head. I stay not to quote texts descriptive of sin. It is a debt, a burden, a thief, a sickness, a leprosy, a plague, a poison, a serpent, a sting;

everything that a man hates, it is; a load of curses, and calamities beneath whose crushing, most intolerable pressure, the whole creation groaneth. Name me the evil that springs not from this root—the crime that I may not lay at its door. Who is the hoary sexton that digs man a grave? Who is the painted temptress that steals his virtue? Who is the murderess that destroys his life? Who is the sorceress that first deceives, and then damns his soul?—Sin.

Who, with icy breath, blights the fair blossoms of youth? Who breaks the hearts of parents? Who brings old men's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave?—Sin.

Who changes gentle children into vipers, tender mothers into monsters, and their fathers into worse than Herods, the murderers of their own innocents?—Sin.

Who casts the apple of discord on household hearths? Who lights the torch of war, and bears it blazing over trembling lands? Who, by division in the Church, rends Christ's seamless robe?—Sin.

Who is this Delilah that sings the Nazarite asleep, and delivers up the strength of God unto the uncircumcised? Who, winning smiles on her face, honeyed flattery on her tongue, stands in the door to offer the sacred rights of hospitality, and when suspicion sleeps, treacherously pierces our temples with a nail? What fair Siren is this, who, seated on a rock by the deadly pool, smiles to deceive, sings to lure, kisses to betray, and flings her arm around our neck and leaps with us into perdition?—Sin.

Who turns the soft and gentlest heart to stone? Who hurls reason from her lofty throne, and impels sinners, mad as Gadarene swine, down the precipice, into a lake of fire?—Sin.

—Dr. Guthrie.

## THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH.

Romans vi. 23.

## The Rod and Staff.



**S**HORT while ago, we were at the home of a lady, a dear friend. It was an evil day with her. She was ill, had been very ill for weeks. The physicians had little hopes of her getting well, and she herself had no more. Yet she was very calm and cheerful. Her eyes and her whole face and bearing spoke of a deep sweet peace within. Though the frail, wasted

body was weak and almost helpless, the spirit evidently had something to lean upon. Her heart was strong, was manifestly borne up by something. What was that stay? On what was she resting? Had you been there, you would have seen. By her side, half hidden on the bed, lay her Bible. She read it, thought upon it, believed it, loved it. She so used it in her long, sore sickness; she had been wont to use it in the days of health. And in that Word of God was the source of her peace and strength. That sure, tried Word was the support on which she was leaning. She found it God's own rod and staff, and with both hands, of faith and love, she was holding by it.

Dear reader, there are evil days coming to you. There are times drawing towards you, and you know not how near they are, when all will be darkness and trouble without, and you will need light and peace within. There is but one thing in all the world that can be such a support to you. It is the same that our sick friend had found. It is the Bible, with its message of grace and truth in Christ Jesus. It is this firm, strong staff which God has provided and offers to put into your hand. Take it now, before the evil days come. Learn to handle it. Study it. With all your heart, trust every word of it, and against all obstacles keep it.—*Monmouth Y. M. C. A. Bulletin.*

**T**WO and two make four,—that is mathematics. Hydrogen and oxygen in certain proportions make water,—that is science. Christ, and Him crucified, is the power and wisdom of God for salvation,—that is revelation. But how do you know? Put two and two together, and you have four,—count and see. Put hydrogen and oxygen together, and you have water,—taste and prove. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,—believe and thou shalt know. The last is as clear a demonstration as the others.