

The King's Highway.

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

And an Highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness.—Isa. 35-8

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ORIGINAL SIN

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Sin, as actual transgression, is a fact in human experience. It is universally recognized, though perchance not by all as sin in a theological sense. Professor James spoke of it as "something really wild in the universe," that needs correcting. Modern humanists, who are said to be "not theistic, but frankly atheistic," acknowledge that there is something wrong in human experience. They may speak of sin as a complex, guilt as a neurosis, crime as a disease, and say that "salvation is not of a cross but a psychological test," yet what they have in mind is what the theologian terms "sin." Sin is a universal fact universally admitted.

However, there is some disagreement among biblical scholars in regard to original sin. Some deny it altogether, as Dr. Finney did, speaking of it as "anti-scriptural and nonsensical." To him inbred sin was nothing more than a pathological condition which he termed "physical depravity." He said what David meant when he declared, "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me," that he "had been a sinner from the commencement of his mortal existence, or from the earliest moment of his capability of being a sinner." In like manner he explains all Scripture that is supposed to have to do with the subject of inbred sin.

But agreeable to both Scripture and experience is the statement: "Original sin standeth not in the following or imitating of Adam, as the Pelagians so vainly talk; but it is the corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil and that continually." Wm. Wesley was in unison with this statement, as appears from his writings; for we read: "That tempers contrary to the nature and law of God are natural is a point of daily experience." In this he represents the human family in epitome, Dr. Finney included, when he affirmed: "I have felt in me, a thousand times, something which made me transgress God's law, whether I would or no." Romans 5:12-19 can refer to nothing else. Even Dr. Finney is compelled to admit its force when he said:

"The Bible once, and only once, incidentally intimates that Adam's first sin has in some way been the occasion, not the necessary physical cause, of all the sins of man * * * * It neither says nor intimates anything in relation to the manner in which Adam's sin has occasioned this result. It only incidentally recognizes the fact, and then leaves it, just as if the "quo modo" was too obvious to need explanation." His unwilling admission and attempted evasion of the great doctrinal statement of the Apostle Paul weakens, if it does not destroy, his argument against original sin.

Original sin was not infused in the soul by God. The 'carnal mind' is the result of man's following his own will, having lost the image of God. On the day that Adam sinned he lost the original 'righteousness and true holiness' in which he was created. His heart was left to its own devices, and, unrestrained by the divine will (as a voluntary agent) it naturally developed a positive hostility to the will of God. As when life departs from the body, positive corruption begins, so did the soul of Adam on the withdrawal of God manifest that corruption which is called 'inbred sin' because it is innate or natural. This is inbred sin; a corrupt state of heart which opposes God and holiness. In the unregenerate this state of heart is not only contrary to the will of God, but must always constitute thus, unless God moves upon it by His gracious Spirit."

"How helpless nature lies,
Unconscious of her load!
The heart unchanged can never rise
To happiness and God."

Original sin is a state of heart, not an act. Sin is committed in but three ways, by word of mouth, in thought, or by deeds. But these are not inbred sin. The seed of sin is the cause of all outward transgressions. "Actual sin bears the same relation to inward sin that the plant does to the root, or the eruptions of leprosy bear to the inward disease, the relation of effect to cause. It is a state of heart that results in outward manifestations." James 1:15, Mark 7:21-23.

The natural appetites of the body are not original sin. Some have mistaken them as such, and have attempted to eradicate them from the heart by punishing the body by self-denial, fastings, flagellations, self-tortures, forbidding to marry, seclusion in cloisters and

monasteries. Such a procedure is both wrong and impossible. "To attempt," says the Rev. A. Watmough, "with some ancient philosophers, to root up the passions is vain. They are deathless as the spirit to which they belong; nor can their ardor be diminished. Sanctification is not intended to quench their native luster or force, but to put out those unhallowed fires with which they have been made to burn, and then light them afresh at the altar of God." The passions are a God-inherited legacy. Sin consists in their abuse, not in their proper use. The fall put an excitant in them that inclines them to an unnatural state and use, and from this condition come gluttony and lust, etc. (Gal. 5:19-21).

Nor does original sin consist in thinking of evil thoughts. Much perplexity arises here. A person desires to be right and do right in the sight of God, but evil thoughts are suggested to his mind, even at times while engaged in secret devotions. Because of this, the conscientious soul is led to believe that he is yet carnal. These evil thoughts have their rise from one of three possible sources: (1) From the law of association. (2) From the wicked one himself. (3) From the mind of the individual himself. If they come from either of the first two sources, they are not sin per se, nor do they indicate the presence of the carnal nature. But if they come from the mind itself, they evidence the fact of carnality. Thought of evil are not evil thoughts. Joseph had thought of evil suggested to him, but that did not constitute him a sinner, nor were they an evidence of inbred sin. Under the circumstances he could not help thinking about the crime; but he could refuse to entertain the thought, delight in it, or yield to it. When evil thoughts are attractive to us, we may well cry in fear and trembling: "Create in me a clean heart, O God." But when they are repulsive to the mind it is evident that they are suggested from an outside source.

A state of heart that makes one loathe to do the will of God in all things, that makes one unwilling to do God's bidding; or when it appears easy to do what is known to be wrong, and hard to do what is known to be right, is evidently due to a condition of inbred sin. Original sin is what the apostle speaks of in Hebrews: "The sin which doth so easily beset us." It is what Wesley called "The seed of sin," because all outward sin or actual trans-

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