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WHAT IS SIN?

SIN is "any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God" (1 John 3:4; Romans 4:15), in the inward state and habit of the soul, as well as in the outward conduct of the life, whether by omission or commission (Romans 6:12-17; 7:5-24). It is "not a mere violation of the law of our constitution, nor of the system of things, but an offence against a personal lawgiver and moral governor who vindicates His law with penalties. The soul that sins is always conscious that his sin is:

- (1.) Intrinsically vile and polluting, and
- (2.) That it justly deserves punishment, and calls down the righteous wrath of God.

Hence sin carries with it two inalienable characters,

- (1.) Ill-desert, guilt (ῥεατυσ); and
- (2.) Pollution (μαχυλα).

The moral character of a man's actions is determined by the moral state of his heart. The disposition to sin, or the habit of the soul that leads to the sinful act is itself also sin (Romans 6:12-17; Galatians 5:17; James 1:14, 15).

The origin of sin is a mystery, and must forever remain such to us. It is plain that for some reason God has permitted sin to enter this world, and that is all we know. His permitting it, however, in no way makes God the author of sin.

Adam's sin (Gen. 3:1-6) consisted in his yielding to the assaults of temptation and eating the forbidden fruit. It involved in it,

- (1.) The sin of unbelief, virtually making God a liar; and
- (2.) The guilt of disobedience to a positive command

By this sin Adam became an apostate from God, a rebel in arms against his Creator. He lost the favor of God and communion with Him; his whole nature became depraved, and he incurred the penalty involved in the covenant of works.

ORIGINAL SIN refers only to the sin of Adam, committed when he was without sin and without old sinful nature. Our first parents being the root of all mankind, the guilt of their sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature were conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation." Adam the federal head and representative of all his posterity- constituted Adam as he was

also their natural head, and therefore when he fell –all men fell with him (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:22-45). His probation was their probation, and his fall their fall.

Because of Adam's first sin all his posterity came into the world in a state of sin and condemnation, that is,

- (1.) A state of moral corruption, and
- (2.) Of guilt, as having judicially imputed to them the guilt of Adam's first sin

"Original sin" is frequently and improperly used to denote the moral corruption of our whole nature inherited by all men from Adam. Only Adam committed original sin because he sinned when he was without old sin nature. This inherited moral corruption consists in:

- (1.) The loss of original righteousness; and
- (2.) The presence of a constant proneness to evil, which is the root and origin of all actual personal sin:

It is called "sin" (Rom. 6:12, 14, 17; 7:5-17), the "flesh" (Gal. 5:17, 24), "lust" (James 1:14, 15), the "body of sin" (Rom. 6:6), "ignorance," "blindness of heart," "alienation from the life of God" (Eph. 4:18).