

THE CONSTITUTION OF SIN.

"The creature was made subject to evil not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected it in hope."

The introduction of sin into the world necessitated the constitution of things as they were laid in the beginning. If there had been no sin there would have been no *enmity* between God and man; and consequently no antagonism by which to educe good out of evil. Sin and evil are as cause and effect. God is the author of evil, but not of sin; for the evil is the punishment of sin. "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, *and create evil*: I, the Lord, do all these things." (Isa. 45:7) "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos 3:6) The evil then to which man is subjected is the Lord's doing. War, famine, pestilence, flood, earthquake, disease, and death, are the terrible evils which God inflicts upon mankind for their transgressions. Nations cannot go to war when they please, any more than they can shake the earth at their will and pleasure; neither can they preserve peace, when He proclaims war. Evil is the artillery with which He combats the enemies of His law, and of His saints; consequently, there will be neither peace nor blessedness for the nations, until sin is put down, His people avenged, and truth and righteousness be established in the earth.

This is the constituted order of things. It is the constitution of the world; and as the world is sin's dominion, or the kingdom of the adversary, it is the constitution of the kingdom of sin.

The word sin is used in two principal acceptations in the scripture. It signifies in the first place, "*the transgression of the law*"; and in the next, it represents that physical principle of the animal nature, which is the cause of all its diseases, death, and resolution into dust. It is that in the flesh "*which has the power of death*" and it is called *sin*, because the development, or fixation, of this *evil* in the flesh, was the result of transgression. Inasmuch as this evil principle pervades every part of the flesh, the animal nature is styled "sinful flesh," that is, "*flesh full of sin*"; so that *sin*, in the sacred style, came to stand for the substance called *man*. In human flesh "dwells no good thing" (Rom. 7:17,18); and all the evil a man does is the result of this principle dwelling in him. Operating upon the brain, it excites the "propensities", and these set the "intellect" and "sentiments" to work. The propensities are blind, and so are the intellect and sentiments in a purely natural state; when therefore, the latter operate under the sole impulse of the propensities, "the understanding is darkened through ignorance, because of the blindness of the heart" (Eph. 4:18). The nature of the lower animals is as full of this physical evil principle as the nature of man; though it cannot be styled *sin* with the same expressiveness; because it does not possess them as the result of their own transgression; the name, however, does not alter the nature of the thing.

A defective piece of mechanism cannot do good work. The principle must be perfect, and the adaptation true, for the working to be faultless. Man in his physical constitution is imperfect; and this imperfection is traceable to the physical organization of his flesh, being based on the principle of decay and reproduction from the blood; which, acted upon by the air, becomes the life of his flesh. All the phenomena which pertain to this arrangement of things are summed up in the simple word *sin*; which is, therefore, not an individual abstraction, but a concretion of relations in all animal bodies; and the source of all their physical infirmities. Now, the apostle says, that the flesh thinks, that is, the brain, as all who think are well assured from their own consciousness. If, then, this thinking organ be commanded not to do what is natural for it to do under blind impulse, will it not naturally disobey? Now this disobedience is wrong, because what God commands to be done is right, and only right; so that "by his law is the knowledge of sin"; and this law requiring an obedience which is not natural, flesh is sure to think in opposition to it. The philosophy of superstition is -- "*religion in harmony with the thinking of the flesh*"; while true religion is religion in accordance with the thoughts of God as expressed in His law. Hence, it need excite no astonishment that religion and superstition are so hostile and that all the world should uphold the latter; while so few are to be found who are identified with the religion of God. They are as opposite as flesh and spirit.

Sin, I say, is a synonym for human nature. Hence, the flesh is invariably regarded as *unclean*. It is therefore written, "How can he be clean who is born of a woman?" (Job 25:4) "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." (Job 14:4) "What is man that he should be clean? And he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous? Behold, God putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, who drinketh iniquity like water?" (Job 15:14-16) This view of sin in the flesh is enlightening in the things concerning Jesus. The apostle says, "God *made him to be sin* for us, who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21); and this he explains in another place by saying, that "He sent his own son *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, and for sin, condemned sin *in the flesh*" (Rom. 8:3) in the offering of his body once (Heb. 10:10,12,14). Sin could not have been condemned in the body of Jesus, if it had not

existed there. His body was as unclean as the bodies of those for whom he died; for he was born of a woman, and "not one" can bring a clean body out of a defiled body; for "that", says Jesus himself, "which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6).

According to this physical law, the Seed of the woman was born into the world. The nature of Mary was as unclean as that of other women; and therefore could give birth only to "a body" like her own, though especially "*prepared of God*" (Heb. 10:5). Had Mary's nature been immaculate, as her idolatrous worshippers contend, an immaculate body would have been born of her; which, therefore, would not have answered the purpose of God; which was to condemn sin in the flesh; a thing that could not have been accomplished, if there were no sin there.

Speaking of the conception and preparation of the Seed, the prophet as a typical person, says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). This is nothing more than affirming that he was born of sinful flesh; and not of the pure and incorruptible angelic nature.

Sinful flesh being the hereditary nature of the Lord Jesus, he was a fit and proper sacrifice for sin; especially as he was himself "innocent of the great transgression", having been obedient in all things. Appearing in the nature of the seed of Abraham (Heb. 2:16-18), he was subject to all the emotions by which we are troubled; so that he was enabled to sympathize with our infirmities (Heb. 4:15), being "made in all things like unto his brethren". But, when he was "born of the Spirit", in the quickening of his mortal body by the spirit (Rom. 8:11), he became a spirit; for "that which is born of the spirit is spirit". Hence, he is "the Lord the Spirit", incorruptible flesh and bones.

Sin in the flesh is hereditary; and entailed upon mankind as the consequence of Adam's violation of the Eden law. The "*original sin*" was such as I have shown in previous pages. Adam and Eve committed it; and their posterity are suffering the consequence of it. The tribe of Levi paid tithes to Melchisedec many years before Levi was born. The apostle says, "Levi, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham". Upon the same federal principle, all mankind ate of the forbidden fruit, being in the loins of Adam when he transgressed. This is the only way men can by any possibility be guilty of the original sin. Because they sinned in Adam, therefore they return to the dust from which Adam came -- says the apostle, "*in whom* all sinned". [This marginal reading of the A.V. cannot be sustained. The Revised Version has struck it out.] There is much foolishness spoken and written about "original sin". Infants are made the subjects of a religious ceremony to regenerate them because of original sin; on account of which, according to Geneva philosophy they are liable to the flames of hell for ever! If original sin, which is in fact sin in the flesh, were neutralized, then all "baptismally regenerated" babes ought to live for ever, as Adam would have done had he eaten of the Tree of Life after he had sinned. But they die; which is a proof that the "regeneration" does not "cure their souls"; and is, therefore, mere theological quackery.

Mankind being born of the flesh, and of the will of man, are born into the world under the constitution of sin. That is, they are the natural born citizens of Satan's kingdom. By their fleshly birth, they are entitled to all that *sin* can impart to them. What creates the distinction of bodies politic among the sons of Adam? It is constitution, or covenant. By constitution, then, one man is English, and another American. The former is British because he is born of the flesh under the British constitution. In this case, he is worthy of neither praise nor blame. He was made subject to the constitution, not willingly, but by reason of them who chose that he should be born under it. But when he comes of age, the same man may become an American. He may put off the old man of the political flesh, and put on the new man, which is created by the constitution of the United States; so that by constitution, he becomes an American in every particular but the accident of birth. This will be exact enough to illustrate what I am about to say.

There are two states or kingdoms, in God's arrangements, which are distinguished by constitution. These are the Kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of God. The citizens of the former are all *sinners*; the heirs of the latter are *saints*. Men cannot be born heirs by the will of the flesh; for natural birth confers no right to God's Kingdom. Men might be born sinners before they can become saints; even as one must be born a foreigner before he can be an *adopted* citizen of the States. It is absurd to say that children are born holy, except in the sense of their being legitimate. None are born holy, but such as are born of the Spirit into the Kingdom of God. Children are born sinners or unclean, because they are born of sinful flesh; and "that which is born of the flesh is flesh", or sin. This is a misfortune, not a crime. They did not will to be born sinners. They have no choice in the case; for it is written, "The creature was *made subject to the evil*, not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected it *in hope*" (Rom. 8:20). Hence, the apostle says, "By Adam's disobedience the many were *made sinners*" (Rom. 5:19); that is, they were endowed with a nature like his,

which had become unclean, as the result of disobedience; and by the constitution of the economy into which they were introduced by the will of the flesh, they were constituted transgressors before they were able to discern between right and wrong.

Upon this principle, he that is born of sinful flesh is a sinner as he that is born of English parents is an English child. Such a sinner is an heir of all that is derivable from sin. Hence, new-born babes suffer all the evil of the peculiar department of Satan, or sin's kingdom, to which they belong. Thus, in the case of the Amalekites, when the divine vengeance fell upon them, the decree was -- "Utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not but slay both man and woman, *infant and suckling*, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Sam 15:3). The destruction of "infants and sucklings" is especially commanded in divers parts of scripture. Not because they were responsible transgressors; but, on the same principle that men not only destroy all adult serpents that come in their way, but the thread-like progeny also; for in these is the germ of venomous and malignant reptiles. Had God spared the infants and sucklings of the Canaanitish nations, when they had attained to manhood, even though they had been trained by Israel, they would have reverted to the iniquities of their fathers. Even Israel itself proved a stiff-necked and perverse race, notwithstanding all the pains bestowed upon their education by the Lord God; how much more perverse would such a seed of evil serpents as the Canaanitish offspring have turned out to be?

It is a law of the flesh that "like produces like". Wild and truthless men reproduce themselves in their sons and daughters. The experiment has been tried on Indian infants. They have been taken from their parents, and carefully educated in the learning and civilization of the white man; but when they have returned to their tribe as men, they have thrown off the habits of their patrons, and adopted the practices of savage life. The same tendency is seen in other animals. Hatch the eggs of the wild turkey under a tame one; and as soon as they are able to shift for themselves they will leave the poultry yard, and associate with the wild species of the woods. So strong is habit, that it becomes a law to the flesh, when continued through generations for a series of years.

But men are not only made, or constituted sinners by the disobedience of Adam, but they become sinners even as he, *by actual transgression*. Having attained the maturity of their nature, they become accountable and responsible creatures. At this crisis, they may be placed by the divine arranging in a relation to His word. It becomes to them a Tree of Life (Prov. 3:18), inviting them to "take, and eat, and live for ever". If, however, they prefer to eat of the world's forbidden fruit, they come under the sentence of death in their own behalf. They are thus doubly condemned. They are "condemned already" to the dust as natural born sinners; and, secondarily, condemned to a resurrection to judgment for rejecting the gospel of the kingdom of God: by which they become obnoxious to "*the SECOND Death*" (Rev. 20:14).

Thus men are sinners in a twofold sense; first, by natural birth and next, by transgression. In the former sense, it is manifest they could not help themselves. They will not be condemned to the Second Death because they were born sinners; not to any other pains and penalties than those which are the common lot of humanity in the present life. They are simply under that provision of the constitution of sin which says, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return". Now, if the Lord God had made no other arrangement than that expressed in the sentence upon the woman and the man, they and all their posterity in all their generations would have incessantly gone to dust and there have remained for ever. "The wages of sin is death." Sinful flesh confers no good thing upon its offspring; for holiness, righteousness, incorruptibility, and life for ever are not hereditary. None of these are inherent in animal flesh. Sinners can only acquire them by a conformity to the law of God; who offers them freely to all who thirst after the water of life eternal (Rev. 22:17; Isa. 55:1-3).