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THEOLOGICAL REVIEW.

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AND ITS VICINITY.

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THE  
BIBLICAL REPERTORY AND THEOLOGICAL  
REVIEW.

FOR OCTOBER 1830.

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THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN AS HELD BY  
THE CHURCH, BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER THE  
REFORMATION.

Although, as has been shown in a former article, the Pelagian doctrines respecting original sin were condemned by councils and popes, yet the heresy was not soon extinguished; but was in whole or in part adopted by many learned and ingenious men. To many, the opinions of Augustine appeared harsh, and hardly reconcilable with moral agency and human accountableness. They, therefore, endeavoured to strike out a middle course between the rigid doctrines of Augustine and the unscriptural opinions of Pelagius. This led to the adoption of an intermediate system, which obtained the denomination of semi-Pelagianism; and as these views seem to have been generally received about Marseilles, in the south of France, the abettors of this theory were very commonly called *Massilienses*. Augustine entered also into this controversy, and carried on a correspondence on the subject with Prosper and Hilary, two learned men of that region; the former of whom ardently opposed the semi-Pelagians, while the latter was inclined to favour them. By degrees, however, the public attention was called off from this subject. The darkness and confusion produced by the incursion of the northern bar-

barians took away all opportunity and disposition to discuss those abstruse matters. Ages of ignorance succeeded, which have emphatically been called "the dark ages." Superstition advanced, indeed, with rapid strides, but doctrinal investigation was neglected; or degenerated into mere logomachies, or useless thorny disputations.

We shall therefore pass over this long dark period with this slight notice, and will proceed to take a survey of the period antecedent to the reformation; and endeavour to ascertain the opinions of some of those acute and metaphysical men, denominated *schoolmen*. It has become customary for almost all classes of modern writers to treat the scholastic theology with sovereign contempt; and this often without any adequate knowledge of the system which they condemn. It is true, these ingenious men often exhausted their energies and lost their labour by a vain attempt to fathom an abyss: but it would surprise some modern metaphysicians and theologians to learn how exactly they themselves are running in the track, and pursuing the very footsteps of these despised schoolmen.

Our first object, therefore, will be to lay before the reader a brief abstract of the discussions of the *angelical* doctor, St Thomas Aquinas, on the subject of original sin. The subject is treated in the eighty-second question of his second book.

On this subject he starts four queries. 1. "Whether original sin is *a habit*? 2. Whether original sin is *one*, in man? 3. Whether it consists in concupiscence? 4. Whether it exists in an equal degree in all?"

This author, in his vast work, entitled *SUMMA THEOLOGICÆ*, invariably commences his discussion by briefly stating some arguments on each side of the question.

On the first question proposed above, he brings forward the following objections to the affirmative. 1. "Original sin consists in the privation of original righteousness, as is declared by Anselm; but a privation is not a habit, therefore original sin is not a habit." 2. "Actual sin is more deserving of blame than original sin, because it possesses more of a voluntary nature; but a mere habit of actual sin is not chargeable with guilt; for if it were, then a man would be guilty of sin all the time he was asleep. Original sin therefore is not a habit." 3. "Besides, in evil, the act always precedes the habit; for no evil habit is ever infused, but always acquired: but no act precedes original sin; therefore original sin is not a habit.

"But, on the other hand, Augustine declares that infants are

the subjects of concupiscence; but they are not so in regard to the act; therefore original sin in them must be a habit."

The conclusion which he draws from a view of both sides of the question, is the following: "Original sin is a habit, but not in the same way as knowledge is a habit; but it is a certain inordinate condition of nature, and a debility consequent on the privation of original righteousness," which proposition he proceeds to explain as follows: "The word habit is taken in a two-fold sense; in the first, it signifies a power by which one is inclined to act; in this sense, knowledge and virtue are called habits: but in the other sense, habit is a disposition or state of nature composed of many particulars, according to which nature is in a condition favourable or unfavourable for any given exercise. Now, according to the first sense of the word, original sin is not a habit, but according to the second it is; just as we speak of health as a good habit or state of the body; and sickness as the contrary. Original sin may, therefore, be described to be "a certain inordinate condition or disposition proceeding from the loss of harmony in the exercise of the moral powers, in which harmony original righteousness consisted: just as sickness is a certain disordered state of the body and its functions, arising from the loss of that equal temperament in which health consists. On account of this analogy, original sin is often called "a disease of the mind." And as in bodily sickness, there is not a mere privation of that regular state and action in which health consists, but also an inordinate disposition, so also, original sin includes both a privation of original righteousness, and a disorder of the faculties of the mind: it is not, therefore, merely a privation, but is also a corrupt habit."

"Again, as actual sin consists in the irregularity of our moral exercises, and original sin in the inordinate disposition of our nature, original sin may have the true nature and ill-desert of sin; but such an inordinate condition of the soul has not the nature of an act, but of a habit; therefore, original and actual sin are distinct, although both are connected with ill-desert."

But in regard to the third objection, stated above, in which it was alleged, that in evil, acts must precede the habit, as there can be no infusion of evil habits, "I would observe," says he, "that it has already been stated, that original sin does not consist in that kind of a habit in which there is a power inclining us to act; for although from original sin there does follow an

inclination to inordinate action, yet not directly, but indirectly; namely, by the removal of original righteousness, by which these inordinate motions were restrained, and every thing preserved in its regular condition: just as in the case of bodily sickness there follows indirectly an inclination to irregular bodily motions. Original sin, therefore, ought not to be considered 'an infused habit,' nor a habit acquired by repeated acts, but an innate disposition derived from the voluntary transgression of the first man."

The above will serve as a specimen of the manner in which this subject was discussed in the thirteenth century. It is not to our purpose to take any notice of the author's answers to the other questions stated above.

It is now time to bring distinctly into view the opinions of the reformers on the subject of original sin. And here it may be observed in the general, that while these distinguished and holy men appealed to the Bible for the proof of their doctrines, and would agree to submit to no other judge in matters of faith, yet they were all much in the habit of studying the writings of Augustine, whose views of doctrine appeared to them to be remarkably accordant with the sacred scriptures. From a knowledge of this fact, it might readily be inferred that the reformers agreed with the father before-mentioned, in his views of original sin. There is no occasion, however, to have recourse to reasoning on this point: the confessions, catechisms, and treatises of these men, are as explicit as we could wish them to be; and although they fell into deplorable divisions about other matters, yet in regard to doctrine, it is remarkable, they were all of one mind. This unanimity is not a conclusion merely inferred from their writings; but at the famous conference between Luther and Zuingle, and their respective friends and adherents at Marpurg, where they were unable to come to any agreement respecting the eucharist, it was ascertained by a particular comparison of ideas on all the important doctrines of religion, that no difference of opinion existed among them on these points. And that this conference, from which the friends of peace had expected so much, might not be altogether without fruit, a paper, or confession, consisting of fourteen articles, was prepared and signed by all the theologians present. The fourth of these articles related to original sin, and was in the following words: "Quarto, credimus, quod peccatum originale sit nobis innatum, et ab Adamo in nos propagatum. Et quod sit tale peccatum, quod omnes

homines damnationi obnoxios faciat. Ita, quidem, ut nisi Jesum Christum nobis sua morte et vita subvenisset, omnes homines propter originale peccatum damnati fuissent, nec in regnum dei, et ad æternam felicitatem pervenire potuissent.”

These doctrinal articles were subscribed by Luther, Melancthon, Jonas, Osiander, Brentius, Agricola, Ecolampadius, Zuingle, Bucer and Hedio.

It is true, however, that Zuingle fell, for a while, under some suspicion of error, in regard to the doctrine of original sin; because he maintained that infants, the offspring of believing parents, would not finally perish for want of baptism: and it has been alleged, that in some of his writings he spake of original sin rather as our disease and curse than as our sin. On this account Rhegius addressed an admonitory letter to him, to which Zuingle replied explicitly and fully, so as to give full satisfaction to Rhegius and to others; and now, A.D. 1529, at Marpurg, he and his followers were as ready to subscribe this doctrine as Luther himself. After the breach was found to be irreconcilable on the subject of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, the Lutherans indulged great bitterness of spirit towards this noble reformer, and often spoke of him and his adherents as *pelagianising*: although, in fact, they were as orthodox on this point as the Lutherans themselves.

As it appears that no diversity of opinion existed among the reformed on this subject, it will be sufficient, in addition to what has been said already, merely to exhibit the words of the famous confession of Augsburg, sometimes called the Augustan confession. “Peccatum originis habet privationem originalis justitiæ, et cum hoc inordinatam dispositionem partium animæ; unde non est privatio, sed quidam habitus corruptus.” “Original sin consists in the want of original righteousness, and in an inordinate disposition of the faculties of the soul: so that it is not merely a privation, but a certain corrupt habit.”

The perfect agreement of all the reformers on the subject of the imputation of the first sin of Adam to all his posterity, must be well known to all who are conversant with their writings. Their opinions on this subject have, however, been collected by the very learned Andrew Rivet, in his work on Original Sin, which is contained in the third volume of the folio edition of his works. It will be unnecessary, therefore, at present to exhibit their testimony on this point.

The far famed council of Trent formed several canons on



the subject of original sin, but they were expressed in the most ambiguous terms. Their object was, in general terms, to recognize the ancient doctrine of the church on this point, but not to censure any of their own doctors, who differed exceedingly from one another in their views of the subject. That this was indeed the motive which actuated them, is explicitly declared by one of their most learned members, Andradius, who became also the principal defender of the canons and proceedings of that body. He informs us that the decrees of the council on this subject were not intended to condemn even the opinions which had been published by Albert Pighius, who confined original sin entirely to the imputation of the sin of Adam, and asserted that there was no such thing as inherent, hereditary depravity; for, he says, it was their purpose to leave all men at liberty to form what opinions they pleased respecting the nature of original sin.

Andradius himself, in treating this subject, makes a free use of this liberty, and discourses in the following manner: "Man, in his original creation, received a constitution, in which were implanted a number of appetites, desires, and affections, between which, considered in themselves, there was not a perfect concord, for the flesh naturally lusted against the mind, and *vice versa*: but over these purely natural affections there was superinduced a moral character, called 'original righteousness,' by which all the irregular tendencies of the nature of man were restrained within proper bounds, and the exercise of the whole rendered harmonious." "The propension of these natural inclinations," he says, "is not in itself sinful, but when original righteousness is removed, then it becomes sinful by its disorder and extravagance. The very essence of original sin therefore consists in the absence of original righteousness, from which defect all sinful concupiscence proceeds. These natural inclinations, therefore, called 'concupiscence,' are not evil *per se*, but only by irregularity and excess; therefore, when the mind is renewed by the Holy Spirit, and they are again restrained within their proper limits, they cease to be sinful." But as all sin supposes the transgression of a law, Andradius asks, "whether the loss of original righteousness is repugnant to any law;" and answers, "that there is, indeed, no express law to which it is opposed," but says, "it is contrary to the general law of our nature, which requires every thing essential to our moral perfection." But here our ingenious author falls into a difficulty,

for he lays it down as a principle, "that all sin is the act of an intelligent and voluntary agent in violation of the law of God;" but the loss of original righteousness was owing to the personal fault of Adam, who was the only voluntary agent concerned in the transaction. His answer is subtle, though unsatisfactory; but it is borrowed from Augustine. "As all men were then included in Adam, so our wills were included in his will, and thus original sin may be said to be voluntary in us." But, whereas, there was but an obscure exercise of our will in the commission of the first sin, he maintains, and it is accordant with the common opinion of popish theologians, "that of all sins, original sin is the least;" but as this is directly contrary to the declaration of the fathers, they say, that the reason why it had been called *great* by them was, on account of its wide diffusion and universal propagation.

It is very evident, therefore, from the explicit declarations of this great defender of the council of Trent, how much they obscured and misrepresented this fundamental doctrine of scripture; and, accordingly, he finds great fault with a writer of his own church, who had taught, that from the soul infected with original sin no good thing could naturally proceed; asserting, that human nature was not so entirely depraved, but that from it by proper discipline, some good thing might proceed without the aid of grace; and this good he does not confine to external acts, but extends to spiritual exercises; therefore, according to him, the seeds of genuine piety must exist in our corrupt nature, previous to regeneration.

Chemnicus, from whose EXAMEN the preceding account is taken, gives his own views and those of his brethren on this subject; an abstract of which we will here insert, and which may be considered as expressive of the opinions of all the reformers, as this defence of their opinions met with universal approbation.

He utterly denies the truth of the principle asserted by Andradius, that in the original constitution of man, there existed a tendency to disorder, which was only restrained by the superadded gift of righteousness; and maintains, that man in his state of original integrity possessed perfectly the image of God, which consisted in a conformity to his law; so that with his whole heart and mind, with all the faculties of the soul, and all the appetites and members of the body, there was perfect strength, and no tendency to excess or evil. The law of God, which required him to love his Creator with all his soul

and mind and strength, was fully written in his heart, to which there was a perfect conformity in every thought and desire. There existed, therefore, in man thus pure and holy, nothing of that struggling of carnal appetites and desires against spiritual exercises which is now experienced by the regenerate, and which is called concupiscence. Now the law of God requires a complete conformity to its precepts in our acts, and in the whole frame and state of our minds, and where this is not found, condemns us as sinners. Experience, as well as the word of God, teaches, that man's mind in its unrenewed condition, instead of being illumined with the rays of truth, is replete with horrible darkness; that his will is turned in aversion from God, and indulges enmity towards him; that the affections are perverse; and that in all the powers, there is a horrible *αταξία* and depravation, so far as relates to spiritual things. Then, this able polemic goes on to adduce the texts of scripture which bear on this point, which we shall at present omit; and only remark, that no modern author has insisted more strenuously on the depth of original sin, and the total depravity of the human heart in all ages and in all persons. As to the seat of depravity, he says that the scriptures refer it to the mind, the will, and the heart; it has infested all our faculties, and commences with our very being.

“Nor,” says he, “need we fear, as does Andradius, lest we should exaggerate the evil and extent of our innate corruption; for if we attend to the language of scripture, we shall be convinced that the depth of the disease exceeds all conception; as says David, “who can understand his errors?” And Jeremiah, “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?” The papists acknowledge that original sin exists, but pretend, that it is not safe to define what it is; and allege, that the ancient church never defined it. But let the impartial reader only compare the awful descriptions of this evil in the word of God, with the frigid, mitigating discourses of the papists, and their absurd philosophising respecting *puris naturalibus*, and he will be convinced that their doctrine is not that of the Bible. And as to the pretence of Andradius, that the council of Trent did not think proper to give any definition of original sin, we oppose to it the explicit testimony of the Holy Spirit, repeatedly given in the scriptures, in which the nature of this fountain of all iniquity is clearly exhibited. And in regard to the fathers, they certainly call it *the vice of our nature, pollution, inbred*

*corruption, &c.* And he concludes his proofs of the doctrine of original sin with the following weighty sentence: “*Et quando Domini os loquitur omnis caro debet silere, cœlum et terra auscultare: Andradius vero mavult cum concilio Tridentino opinari, quam cum scriptura, credere.*”

The doctrine of total depravity, derived as an inheritance from our first father, is not inculcated more strongly by any writer than by Luther, in his work, entitled “*DE SERVO ARBITRIO,*” written against the celebrated Erasmus. It was our first purpose to have given an abridgment of this treatise of the great reformer; but Luther’s style and manner are so peculiar, that his writings do not bear to be abridged without much loss; and having met with a treatise on the subject of original sin, by a celebrated professor of the Lutheran church, D. G. Sohnnius, who lived and wrote in the sixteenth century, we have concluded to lay before our readers an abstract of this discourse, from which may be learned what views were entertained on this subject, in the age immediately after that of Luther and Calvin. This theologian received the first part of his education at Marburg, but when he was only fifteen years of age his residence was transferred to Wittenberg, A. D. 1589, where his progress in learning was astonishing. At first his extraordinary talents were most assiduously devoted to the study of the civil law: but, in the twenty-first year of his age, he seems to have been led, by a remarkable divine influence on his mind, to relinquish the profession which he had chosen, and devote himself to theology, which he pursued with unremitting ardour, at Marburg, for two years; when his proficiency was so remarkable, that although no more than twenty-three years of age, he was made theological professor, and continued in this office to give instructions to candidates for the ministry with extraordinary diligence and conspicuous success for ten years. But differing in opinion with some of his older brethren, respecting the doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ’s body, which he strenuously opposed, and also in some other points of theology; for the sake of a good conscience he resigned his office at Marburg; but after a very short interval, such was his celebrity, he received two invitations, the one from prince Casimir to become professor of theology at Heidelberg, and the other to a similar station at Herborn. He accepted the first, and was inaugurated July 18, 1584. In this situation he conducted himself with consummate wisdom and incessant diligence, in promoting the cause of truth, and

by giving his aid and influence to every enterprize for the benefit of learning and religion; and A.D. 1588, he was chosen one of the ecclesiastical counsellors and senators, but without any interference with his office as professor. But this extraordinary young man soon finished his work upon earth. While in the midst of his useful labours, and when the influence of his peaceful and pious example had become extensive, he was unexpectedly taken out of the world by a pleurisy, in the thirty-seventh year of his age. His theological writings, in Latin, were published soon after his decease, including something like a system of theology; and are remarkable for profound research and accurate discrimination; as we think will be acknowledged by all who impartially peruse the following translation, or rather abstract, of his treatise on original sin. But our object in bringing forward this work is not so much for the sake of its explanations and arguments, in all of which we do not concur, as to furnish the inquisitive reader, with a full view of the opinions of protestants on this point, in the period immediately succeeding the reformation. And no one acquainted with ecclesiastical history will suppose that the doctrines here inculcated were peculiar to this author: the very same are found in the works of every protestant writer of credit in that age.

The first part of the treatise of Sohnnius, in which he discusses the nature of sin and its various distinctions, we omit, as not being now to our purpose: we shall therefore commence with his answer to the objections urged in his day against the doctrine of original sin, from which it will clearly be understood what opinions were then commonly entertained on this subject.

“ Having given some account of the nature and divisions of sin, our next object will be to refute some of those errors which relate to original sin. The first question then is, whether there is any such thing; and this inquiry is the more necessary, because many of the papists so extenuate original sin, that they will scarcely admit that it partakes of the nature of sin. And the Anabaptists have gone to the impudent length of asserting, that original sin is a mere figment of Augustine. In opposition to this error of the Anabaptists and of some of the Romanists, we assert, that their doctrine is not countenanced by scripture, and therefore cannot be true. They appeal, indeed, to Ezek. xviii. 20, where it is said, “ The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; but the soul that

sinneth, it shall die." From which they infer, that the posterity of Adam cannot be guilty in consequence of his fall. To which it may be replied, that Ezekiel is not speaking of the sin of our first father and federal head, which was the sin of the whole species, but of the sins of individuals of the Jewish nation. In this sense, it is true that the son shall not bear the punishment of his father's sin, unless by imitation he is led to do the same; but the sin of Adam was not the sin of an individual, but of the whole race, for he represented the whole species. The first man stood in a situation, in regard to his posterity, which no other man ever did, and his first sin was theirs, in a sense in which no other of his sins could be; for his after sins were personal, and he alone was answerable for them; but his first sin was public, and that which brought death upon all his posterity. The gifts with which Adam was endowed, if they had been retained, would have been for the benefit of all his posterity, but being lost, they were not only forfeited for himself but for them. For as Levi paid tithes while in the loins of his progenitor Abraham, so the whole human race were included in Adam, to stand or fall with him. Hence Paul, in Rom. v. says, that Adam was a type of Christ; so that "*as by* the disobedience of the first Adam many were constituted sinners, by the obedience of the second Adam many were constituted righteous." In this passage it is clearly signified, that the integrity which was given to our first father would have been available for our benefit if he had stood firmly in innocence: but that it was also committed to him to forfeit and lose all blessings for his posterity as well as for himself, if he should prove disobedient. This was the event, and accordingly the precious deposit with which he was intrusted for the whole human race, was lost. Now, this being the state of the case, it is manifest that no son bears the sins of any other father as he does those of Adam; but the soul that sinneth, in the common administration of God's government, dies: but surely this general principle in relation to sin and punishment, does not in the least affect our condition as fallen in the fall of our federal head and representative. The son does not bear, commonly, the sins of his other progenitors, with which he has nothing to do, but he does and must bear the first sin of Adam, which was his own; for though not guilty of the act in his own person, he did commit it by his representative.

2. Another argument brought against the doctrine of original

sin is, that what is not voluntary cannot be sinful, because nothing can have the nature of sin which does not proceed from the exercise of understanding and choice; but what is called original sin, especially in infants, is not voluntary, therefore it cannot possess the nature of sin.

The maxim on which this argument rests is acknowledged in courts of justice, among men; but it ought not to be transferred to the church, so as to affect the doctrine of original sin, which she has always held and believed. Moreover, this maxim has relation altogether to actual sins, but not to original sin: and it is repugnant to the declaration of Paul, Rom. vii. *What I will that I do not, but what I hate that I do.* And Gal. v. *The spirit lusteth against the flesh, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* Augustine, in his Retractions, lib. i. c. 13, declares, "that this political maxim ought to have no place in relation to this point." And in his book against Julian, he says, "Frustra putas ideo in parvulis nullum esse delictum, quia sine voluntate, quæ in illis nulla est, esse non potest." That is, "In vain do you pretend that there can be no sin in infants, because they are not, and cannot be the subjects of voluntary exercise." The maxim is true enough in regard to our own proper acts, but can by no means be admitted in relation to the contagion of original sin; which, however, had its origin in the voluntary act of the first man."

3. A third argument against original sin is, that all sin consists in acts, but infants are capable of no acts, therefore they cannot be the subjects of sin; for, *to sin* is an active verb, and signifies to do something actively; original sin, therefore, cannot exist.

To which it may be answered, that in the Hebrew language, the words which signify "to sin," express not only acts, but habits; not only positive actions, but defects and inherent perversity, which is born with us.

4. It is again argued, that that which is the property of an individual cannot be propagated through a whole race, but the sin of our first parents was the property of those individuals, and cannot be communicated to their posterity.

It is true that the qualities or properties of individuals are not universally propagated through the whole species, except such as are of the nature of *αδυναμίας* or imperfections; for these are constantly propagated through the whole race. For example, that corruption of human nature which is the cause of

death, whatever it may be, is universally propagated; for all the descendants of Adam are mortal: so also original sin is *αδυναμία*, or a natural impotency, or a defect, or a depraved inclination, or *αραξία*,—a disorder of the affections of the mind. Besides the proposition on which the argument is founded is only true of separable qualities, but does not apply at all to such as are inseparable, and which perpetually inhere in the subject; so that they cannot even in thought be severed from it. We do in fact witness many evils which are propagated from both parents. Moreover, the proposition stated above is only true of those qualities which are only found in some individuals, but not to those which are common to the whole species; but original sin is not a quality of a few individuals, but of the whole race; for Adam was the representative of the whole race, and forfeited that *depositum* with which he was entrusted, as the head of the whole family.

5. It is again alleged, that punishments are not sins, but those defects and irregular inclinations which belong to human nature are the punishment of the sin of the first man, and cannot be of the nature of sin.

Here again there is an application of a political maxim to a subject to which it does not belong; for it is a fact clearly established in the divine government, that the privation of the divine image and favour, is both a sin and a punishment, but in different respects. In respect to God inflicting it, it is a punishment; for he in just judgment may deprive his creatures of his grace; but in respect to man, this privation is a sin, which by his own fault he has brought upon himself, and admitted into his own soul.

6. It is again objected, that nature being from God must be good, therefore, there can be no such thing as original sin, or a vitiated nature.

To which it may be replied, that nature was good before the fall, and before sin entered to corrupt it; and nature still, so far as it is the work of God, is good; that is, the substance of the soul, the faculties, and the natural principles of rational action, are good; but nature, as it is depraved, is not the work of God, but something added to his work; namely *αραξία*, or disorder and corruption in the faculties which God created in a state of order and integrity. God is the creator and preserver of the faculties, but not of the sin.

7. The Anabaptists argue, that Adam having been received into favour, was in a state of grace when his children were



procreated; and, therefore, upon the principle that every thing begets its like, he could not propagate offspring infected with original sin.

Answer. There is more in the conclusion than in the premises; for the procreation of offspring is not according to grace, but according to nature; so that whatever the nature of man is since the fall, that only can be propagated. Adam obtained freedom from guilt, not from nature but from grace; but grace cannot be propagated. Man, therefore, cannot propagate any thing but that corrupt nature derived from the fall.

Moreover, the regenerate are not perfectly delivered from the evil nature of sin, which still dwells in them and renders imperfect all that they do. So far as the regenerate act from nature, they act sinfully: all the good which is in them is from the spirit of God, to whom they are indebted for every good thought; it is evident, therefore, that grace, for every motion of which we are dependent on another agent, cannot be propagated: but sin, consisting in a defect or disorder of our nature, and having its origin and proper seat in our own nature, may be propagated. "In me, that is, in my flesh," says Paul, "there dwelleth no good thing." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." And we never hear of a man being regenerated by a natural birth from pious parents; but the regenerate are "born of the Spirit—born of God." They further allege, indeed, that men cannot propagate what they do not possess; and therefore, the regenerate cannot communicate original sin to their offspring, for the guilt of all their sins is removed by a full pardon. To which we reply, as before, that though it is true that a man cannot propagate what he has not, yet as far as nature prevails, all men are sinful, and it is that which properly belongs to our nature which is capable of being propagated; therefore, when a sinful nature is communicated to posterity, it is the communication of what a man does possess; for neither remission of sins nor the infusion of grace do in the least affect the laws by which the propagation of the human species is regulated, for reasons already stated.

8. But the opposers of the doctrine of original sin even appeal to scripture for support to their opinion. They allege, Rom. xi. 6, and 1 Cor. vii. 14, as texts which declare in favour of the children of the saints being born free from original sin. In the former, Paul asserts, "That if the root be holy, so are the branches." But they are deceived by the mere sound of a word; for "holiness" in this place, does not refer to internal

moral qualities, but to external consecration: whatever is devoted solemnly to the service of God, or has a relation to his worship, is called *holy*. Thus, the tabernacle, the altar, the ark, the sacrifices, the priests, and even Jerusalem itself, were holy. The whole nation of Israel, as being in covenant with God, are continually spoken of as "a holy people;" and as the promises of God's covenant with Abraham have respect to his posterity even to the end of the world; so, in a certain sense, these branches which are now broken off, are holy, as they stand in a peculiar relation to God, which other people do not. And in the latter passage, the children of believers are called "holy" on account of their relation to the christian church, as being connected with the visible church by baptism; or as being capable of such connexion, in consequence of their relation to parents who are members of the church. For God makes the same promise to each believer, which he formerly made to Abraham, *I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee*. But this text by no means signifies that the children of believers are born in a state free from all pollution.

9. It is again objected, that the phrase "original sin," never occurs in scripture, and never should have been introduced into the church.

Answer. Many words are conveniently used in theology which are not found in scripture; and this must be the case where the truth is denied and error introduced: and appropriate words and phrases, expressing a clear and definite meaning, save us the necessity of much circumlocution. Now the truth is, that the scriptures use various words to express what is usually denominated "sin," without entering into the distinction between original and actual sin; but the idea conveyed by the phrase "original sin" can be logically inferred from numerous passages of scripture, as we shall show presently. When the Pelagians denied the doctrine of original sin, which the church had before held without dispute, the orthodox fathers invented this name for the sake of avoiding all ambiguity, and that the matter in dispute might be clearly and distinctly exhibited: for the Pelagians strenuously maintained that all sins were actual, or consisted in acts; but the orthodox maintained, that besides the acts of sin, there existed a corruption of nature,—an inherent moral disorder in the faculties, which for convenience, they denominated "original sin."

Having shown that the doctrine of those who oppose original sin, is not contained in scripture, nor can be proved from

it; we now proceed to demonstrate, that it is absolutely repugnant to the testimony of God, in his word; and therefore is a false doctrine which should be exterminated from the church.

The first testimony which we adduce is from Genesis v. 5, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;" and Gen. viii. 21, "For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." The objection to this testimony is, "that this is only spoken of adults, and only shows that there is in man a proneness to go astray: but nothing is here said respecting a hereditary corruption of the human heart." But is it not evident that if all the thoughts and imaginations of the heart are constantly evil from youth upwards, that the nature of man must be corrupt? What stronger evidence could there be of a corruption of nature, than the fact that all men sin and do nothing else but sin, from the moment that they are capable of actual transgression? An effect so universal can never be accounted for by imitation, for children begin to sin before they have much opportunity of imitating the sins of others, and even when the examples before them are pious and good. If from the fruits of holiness we may infer that the tree is good, then certainly on the same principle, from a production of bad fruit it is fairly concluded that the nature is evil. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; but an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, that which is evil." "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Our next testimony we take from Rom. iii. 10. "There is none righteous, no not one." Now, if man's nature be not corrupt, how can it be accounted for, on any rational principles, that all men, without the exception of one, should be unrighteous? To this proof, indeed, Albert Pighius excepts, that it relates to the Jewish nation, and not to the whole race of man. But this is contrary to the express design of the apostle in this passage, which was to prove that both Jews and Gentiles were all under sin and wrath, and all stood in absolute need of salvation by faith in Christ. And in the preceding verse he explicitly declares that he had "proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." And his general conclusion is, "That all the world may become guilty before God." Indeed, if the nation of the Jews only was referred to in this passage, yet it might be fairly inferred, that all other nations were in the same corrupt condition; for why should it be supposed that

universal depravity should be confined to this one people? And history confirms the sentence of the apostle, for it represents other nations as wicked as the Jews. The apostle must, therefore, be considered as describing the moral condition, not of one nation, or one age, but of human nature in all countries and at all times; so far as it is not restored by Christ.

A third testimony for original sin is found in Rom. vii. where Paul, in strong language, describes the power and depth of indwelling sin, as experienced by himself, now in his renewed state. He calls it "a law of sin and death;" as working in him "all manner of concupiscence;" as "deceiving him." And he speaks of it as an abiding principle—"sin that dwelleth in me." As an evil ever present with him in all his exertions to do good; "as a law in his members warring against the law of his mind;" so that he exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The Pelagians, it is true, will not agree that Paul is here speaking in his own person, but pretend that he personates a Jew under conviction of the duty which the law requires, but sensible of his inability to comply with the demands of the law. But that the apostle is here giving us his own experience, is evident from all the circumstances of the case; which opinion is not only held by Augustine in his controversy with Julian, but was maintained by the fathers who preceded him; particularly Cyprian and Hilary.

Other testimonies not less direct and conclusive are, Job. xv. 14, "What is man that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?"

Psalm li. 5, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

John iii. 3, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

Rom. v. 12, "As by one man sin entered into the world,—and so death passed upon all men, because that all have sinned." On this text it is worthy of remark, that it is not only asserted that the punishment of death hath passed upon all men, but the reason is added, namely, "because all have sinned:" so that the fault and punishment, the guilt and pollution, are by the apostle joined together.

Rom. v. 19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners."

Rom. viii. 7, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

Ephes. ii. 3, "And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

And as infants die, as universal experience teaches, it is evident that they must be chargeable with sin; for Paul clearly represents sin as the cause of death—of the death of all men. "And the wages of sin is death."

It would be tedious to enumerate all the objections which Pelagians and others make to the interpretation of these texts. The specimen given above may be taken as an evidence, that they never can succeed in proving that their doctrine is consonant with the testimony of God in the Holy Scriptures.

Hitherto we have disputed with those of the papists and anabaptists, who deny the existence of original sin altogether; but now we come to consider the opinion of those who acknowledge original sin, but insist that it is not any thing inherent in man at his birth, but only the guilt of another's sin imputed. This opinion is maintained by some of the papists, who think that original sin is nothing else than the debt of punishment contracted from the sin of Adam; but that nothing of the pollution of sin is propagated by natural generation. A.D. 1542, Pighius, after the conference which was held at Worms, expressed his opinion in writing as follows, "Original sin does not consist in any defect, nor in any vice, nor depravation of nature; not in any corrupt quality, nor inherent vicious habit in us; but solely in our subjection to the punishment of the first sin; that is, in *contracted guilt*, without any thing of depravity in our nature."

It is a sufficient refutation of this doctrine that it is nowhere found in scripture, and nothing should be received as an article of faith which cannot be proved from this source. Its abettors do indeed endeavour to establish it by an appeal to the Bible, but they are obliged to beg the very point in dispute, as will soon be made to appear.

Pighius, the chief advocate for this opinion, brings forward Rom. v. 12, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Rom. v. 15, "By the offence of one, many are dead." Rom. v. 16, "For the judgment was by one to condemnation." Rom. v. 17, "For by one man's offence death reigned by one." Rom. v. 18, "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation." In all these texts, says Pighius, the apostle attributes condemnation to the sin of Adam, and nothing else. To which it may be replied, that when the apostle declares that "sin had entered

the world," he does not mean, merely, that Adam had become a sinner, but that it had come upon all his descendants; that is, upon all men in the world; for he does not say in this place that *guilt* had entered, but that *sin* had entered into the world. And this is not left to be inferred, but is expressly asserted in the same verse; "*in whom* all have sinned;" or, "*for that* all have sinned." Moreover, when he declares that all are subject to death and condemnation by the sin of one, it is a just inference that they are all partakers of his sin, and are born in a state of moral pollution. In the 19th verse it is said "By the disobedience of one many are constituted sinners;" now to be constituted sinners, includes the idea not only of being made subject to the penalty, but partaking of the nature of sin; for they who are entirely free from the stain of sin, cannot with propriety be called "sinners." Again, the apostle in this chapter teaches, that "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, to deliver us from death and reconcile us to God; certainly he died for none but sinners: but if infants are not sinners, then Christ did not die for them, nor do they belong to him as their Saviour; which is most absurd.

"But," says Pighius, "infants being neither endued with the knowledge of the law, nor with freedom of will, are not moral agents, and are therefore incapable of obedience or disobedience; they cannot, therefore be the subjects of sin, and cannot be bound to endure the penalty of the law on any other account than for the sin of another."

Answer. Although infants have not the exercise of free-will, and are not moral agents, yet they possess a nature not conformable to the law of God: they are not such as the law demands that human beings should be, but are depraved; "children of wrath," and guilty on account of their own personal depravity: for the authorised definition of sin is *ἀνομία*, that is, whatever is repugnant to the law of God.

But they insist further, "that God being the author of nature, if that be depraved, he must be the author of sin."

To which we reply in the words of Augustine: "Both are propagated together, nature and the depravity of nature; one of which is good, the other evil: the first is derived from the bounty of our Creator, the latter must be attributed to our original condemnation. The first has for its cause the good pleasure of God, the latter the perverse will of the first man: *that* exhibits God as the former of the creature, *this* as the punisher of disobedience. Finally, the same Christ for the

creation of our nature, is the maker of man; but for the healing of the disease of this nature, became man."

Again, this doctrine may be refuted by express testimonies from scripture; and ought therefore to be rejected as unsound. Gen. v. 3, "Adam begat Seth in his own image." Job, xiv. 4, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?—not one." Psalm, li. 5, "For I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Rom. v. 19, "By the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners." Ephes. ii. 2, "And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others;" that is, we were born subject to condemnation, because born in a corrupt state. From all which passages, it appears that original sin does not consist merely in guilt, or liableness to punishment; but in a moral depravation of the whole nature; and that it is not contracted by imitation, but by generation. Paul often speaks of that which we call "original sin" under the general name of "sin." In Rom. vi. 8, he speaks of the "old man" being crucified; of the "body of sin" being destroyed; and in chap. vii. he speaks of being "sold under sin," of no good thing dwelling in his flesh; of evil being present with him when he would do good; and of being led captive by "the law of sin" in his members.

Another cogent proof of the heterodoxy of this doctrine may be derived from the baptism of infants, which certainly supposes that they are conceived and born in sin.

It is also worthy of observation that spiritual regeneration is, in scripture, continually put in contrast with "the flesh," and with our fleshly birth. But where is the propriety of this, if the flesh is naturally free from stain?

And finally, the catholic church has ever held an opinion contrary to the one which is now opposed. Augustine, in his second book against Pelagius and Celestius, expresses most explicitly what we maintain: "Whosoever," says he, "contends that human nature, in any age, does not need the second Adam as a physician, on the ground that it has not been vitiated in the first Adam, does not fall into an error which may be held without injury to the rule of faith; but by that very rule by which we are constituted christians, is convicted of being an enemy to the grace of God."

It is again disputed, whether concupiscence, or that disease of our nature which renders us prone to sin, is itself of the nature of sin. This the papists deny; we affirm.

They allege, that whatever exists in us necessarily, and is

not from ourselves, but from another, cannot be of the nature of sin; but this is the fact in regard to concupiscence, *ergo*, &c.

Answer. In a merely political judgment this may be correct, but not in that which is divine. And if the principle here asserted was sound, it would prove too much: it would prove that even the *acts* of concupiscence are not sinful: for there is a sort of necessity for these, supposing the principle of concupiscence to exist in the soul.

It is next objected, that that which is wholly the work of God, as is the whole nature of man, cannot be corrupt, and therefore whatever belongs to this nature as it comes from the hand of God, cannot be otherwise than free from sin.

If there were any force in this argument, it would prove that there could be no such thing as sin in the universe, for all creatures are not only dependent on God for existence at first, but for continuance in being every moment; and if the power of God could not, consistently with its purity, be exerted to bring into existence the children of a corrupt parent, in a state of moral corruption, neither could it be to continue their being, which equally requires the exertion of omnipotence. But the truth is, so far as human nature or human actions are the effect of divine power, the work is good: the essential faculties of the mind and members of the body are good, and the entity of every human act is good; but the evil of our nature is received by natural generation, and is the consequence of the fall of our first parent, and the sinfulness of our acts must not be ascribed to God, "in whom we live and move," but to the perversity of our own wills.

But they allege, that God inflicts this depravity on the race of men, and therefore it cannot partake of the nature of sin, without making God its author.

To which it may be replied, that God inflicts it, as it is a punishment, but not as it is sin; that is, he withdraws all divine influence, and all the gifts of innocence with which the creature was originally endued, in just judgment. Does not God in just displeasure for obstinate continuance in sin, often send blindness of mind as a judgment: in the same manner, he can inflict that pravity of nature which we bring into the world with us as a punishment for the sin of our first parents: that is, he withholds all those gifts and all that influence which are necessary to a state of moral purity. The texts of scripture which might be adduced to establish the doctrine



which has been advanced, have already been cited, and need not now be repeated. But Albert Pighius asserts, that the divine law only prohibits vicious acts, not the latent qualities of the mind: the command says, "Thou shalt not covet," but it does not say thou shalt not have a disease which may induce you to covet. It is true, the act only is mentioned in this prohibition, but the disposition is doubtless included: as in the sixth commandment, it is only said, "thou shalt not kill;" and in the seventh, "thou shalt not commit adultery;" but we know from high authority, that in the one case, the law is violated by sinful anger, and in the other, by a wanton desire; so in the eighth commandment the act of theft only is forbidden expressly, but we know that to covet our neighbour's goods, is sin; and in like manner, although the tenth commandment only prohibits expressly the act of concupiscence; yet undoubtedly the disease, or corrupt disposition from which the act proceeds, is included by implication in the prohibition. And this will appear very clearly by considering the preceptive part of the law: this requires that we should love God with all our heart and mind and strength; and of course, whatever in us that is opposed to a compliance with this command is forbidden, but such an obstacle is this disease of concupiscence, therefore this being forbidden by the holy law of God, is sinful. Infants, therefore, are children of wrath, because they have in them a disease of irregular propensity, although it has not yet been exerted.

Pighius still urges the objection, already refuted in another form, that no law can prohibit equitably, what it is impossible for the creature to avoid; but the infant can no more avoid being born with a proneness to irregular indulgence, than it could avoid coming into the world with the sense of touch or taste; he concludes, therefore, that concupiscence is not prohibited in the tenth commandment.

Now we answer, as before, that if it is true, that nothing is forbidden which cannot be avoided; then, sinful acts are not forbidden, for with a nature labouring under the disease of concupiscence, sinful acts cannot be avoided; and so the argument is not sound, since it proves too much; nay, the renewed themselves cannot avoid sin in this life, as Paul abundantly teaches in the 7th of Romans; therefore, God does prohibit what we cannot avoid, and does command what we cannot perform.

The author then proceeds to refute the opinion of the Flac-

cians, that original sin corrupted the substance of the soul; an opinion industriously propagated by Flaccius Illyricus, one of the most learned of the reformers; and which was embraced and pertinaciously maintained in several places in Germany. But as this error is not now maintained by any with whom we are acquainted, we do not think it necessary to exhibit the elaborate and conclusive arguments by which Sohnnius refutes it.

As we stated before, our object in giving an abstract of this treatise, is not so much to defend the doctrine of hereditary depravity, as to give a correct view of the state of opinion on this subject at the time of the reformation and afterwards. And it cannot fail to occur to the intelligent reader, that none of the objections now made to this doctrine are new, or supported by any new arguments. The whole ground of controversy now occupied by the various discordant opinions, has been gone over before. And the result will probably be as before, that while those who adhere strictly to evangelical doctrine will continue to maintain the old doctrine, its opposers will deviate further and further from orthodoxy. There has never yet been an instance in the history of the church of the rejection of any doctrines of the gospel, where the opposers of the truth have been contented to stop at the first step of departure from sound doctrine. If they who first adopt and propagate an error are sometimes restrained by habit, and by a lurking respect for the opinions of the wise and good, as also by a fear of incurring the censure of heresy, from going the full length which their principles require; yet those who follow them in their error will not be kept back by such considerations. Indeed, the principles of self-defence require, that men who undertake to defend their opinions by argument, should endeavour to be consistent with themselves: and thus it commonly happens, that what was originally a single error, soon draws after it the whole system of which it is a part. On this account it is incumbent on the friends of truth to oppose error in its commencement, and to endeavour to point out the consequences likely to result from its adoption; and to us it appears that nothing is better calculated to show what will be the effect of a particular error, than to trace its former progress by the lights of ecclesiastical history.