

Moral Evil in its Origin and Characteristics

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Origin of Sin.

SEC. 1. *Who were the First Sinful Beings?*

We know neither from reason nor revelation of more than *three* order of moral beings—the angels fallen and un-fallen, and the human race. To assume the existence of others, therefore, is to go just so far beyond the record; and as the fallen angels are first mentioned in the sacred Scriptures, therefore, in the absence of all opposing evidence, we assume them to have been the first moral beings created, and the *first sinners*.

SEC. 2. *The Occasion of Sin.*

It is evident that no *good* reason for *sin* can be given; for then it would not be sin; and *poor* ones are worthless.

Also, if any explanation of the origin of sin should be given which would amount to a *good* reason for it, then the sinner could make good answer for it at the day of final judgment.

The most, therefore, that can be done in this direction is to suggest an *occasion* of sin; yet such an occasion, that the resulting sin shall appear willful and inexcusable.

The view is not infrequently entertained a pure and perfect being would obey God as a matter of course, and that submission to His will on the part of such a one would require no self-denial. Our leading theologians are accustomed to speak of Adam in the garden as one whose *only* inclination was to obedience. Dr. Bushnell speaks of him as "*spontaneous* to good."

But were this true, the first sin would have been impossible. If submission to God were entirely an easy matter, then submission would have been always rendered, and the first sin becomes, if not exactly *impossible* -- for that expression would seem to conflict with free agency -- yet as certain not to be committed as if it were.

In accounting for the existence of sin, it is customary to trace the sinfulness of the human race to an organic connection with sinful Adam; and then to trace his sin to the temptation of the devil. But how is the sin of the devil to be accounted for? Where did his sin originate?

We face here the prime difficulty in theology, the reason or occasion for the commission of the *first sin*.

Here notice, it must have been committed under the three following conditions:

1. Those who committed it came directly from the hand of God, and were, therefore, pure and perfect in their *original constitution*.
2. They must have been placed in the best possible *circumstances* -- the best *surroundings* for the development of a holy character. We argue both these points from the assumed benevolence of God.
3. They encountered no *temptation from* malignant beings; for there were no unholy beings to present it. Hence their position was in all respects the *best* calculated to result in holiness.

The vital point is thus demonstrated that an occasion of sin must exist in a pure and perfect being placed in the *best possible circumstances*. What could it have been?

This leads us to consider the *occasion of sin*.

The word *occasion* is here used with carefulness and precision, as being entirely distinct from the *efficient* cause. For example: the *occasion* of gluttony is the natural appetite for food; but because that between this occasion and the gluttony there come in the free moral, and responsible being, under obligation to keep all his inclinations in due subordination to the higher dictates of reason and judgment therefore does he himself become the *efficient cause* of the sinful gluttony. For the occasion he is in no way responsible, while he shoulders the entire burden of responsibility for the sinful gluttony. So the efficient cause of sin can only be the moral being himself who commits it; and the question now is, How comes it that a being made in the image of God, and pure and perfect in his original constitution, becomes the *efficient cause* of sin?

I. The explanation of the Apostle in James i:14, 15 is that the sinfulness of men -- of "every man"--originates in *innocent constitutional propensity*: "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Let this statement be carefully analyzed:

1. The word *lust*, in this immediate connection, is not a happy translation of the original, being almost invariably used in a bad sense; whereas the original word may mean only *innocent desire*, being the same word used by Paul when he says, "Having a *desire* to depart, and be with Christ" (Phil. i: 23). Also in I Thes. 2:17, the same word is translated "with great *desire*," and our Savior uses the same word when he says "With *desire* I have desired to eat this Passover with you" (Luke xxii: 15). That this is the proper translation here, is evident from what follows.

2. It is "his *own* lust" or desire or inclination-that is, it originates *in himself*; so that the external influences, whatever they may be-whether the devil or wicked men or circumstances -- only stir up a something that was all the while in *him* -- "*his own* lust" -- something that belongs to him, and was in him before he was tempted. Another thing:
 3. It is something that is *innocent*. It comes in before the sin -- it "*bringeth forth*" the sin; so that the sin comes in after it. Therefore this "lust", this occasion of sin, can not be itself sinful, being something *before* sin, and must be *innocent* constitutional propensity of some kind, lying back of voluntary action, and being, therefore, destitute of moral character -- a mere constitutional element. Therefore,
 4. It is not at all of the nature of depravity, nor does it imply any defect in the original constitution, and is consistent with perfect innocence, and even holiness. Christ was "*made in all things like unto His brethren,*" and "*tempted in all points like as they are.*" (Heb.ii 17,;iv:15,)
- Therefore being tempted precisely as we are, He must have been "drawn away of his own lust and enticed," just as we are;. and if that involved no sin in Him, then it does not in us, and *the lust is innocent*. Furthermore:
1. No matter how severe, or even fierce, the "lust" or desire may be. by which the man is drawn away, if he resists the inclination, and no consent of the will follows, there is no sin, only temptation; and which, if resisted, results in virtue -- "*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.*" (Jam. i:12)
 - No matter how strong the temptation in *Eden* may have been, nor how intense the desire to partake of the fruit,' had our first parents only resisted the temptation of the devil, and refused to partake of it, there would have been no sin committed, and the probability is that they would have been confirmed by this resistance in eternal obedience to God. The *occasion* of sin must therefore be *innocent constitutional propensity*.

II. What is this innocent, constitutional propensity -- this "lust," as the Apostle terms it?

It appears to be the love of conscious freedom in a free, moral agent -- a consciousness of freedom, and a desire to exercise it.

Thus-

1. A moral being is a *free* being because "made in the image of God." If not free, he would *not* be made in His image.
2. He must be *conscious* that he is free. He cannot be free *without* being conscious of it.
3. He must love to exercise this freedom in the way of *independent action*; which means mainly that he must love to seek and obtain whatever pleases him-to seek his own personal gratification without restraint. He can not have this freedom without loving to exercise it-in common language, without loving *to have his own*

- way. Nothing, indeed, is plainer than that he can not but love the *objects* which minister to his gratification. He *must* delight to seek his enjoyment in every avenue opened-to roam the universe at will, taxing every object,. every scene, every employment affording satisfaction. But
4. Can he be safely allowed to *have* his own way. No.. For, in that case, each one acting out. his natural inclinations, would set .up for himself, and there would be as many independent wills as there are individuals, each acting for himself, and with no paramount regard for the general good; and the resulting collision, strife, discord, and suffering would be uncontrollable and dreadful, and the universe itself become a moral wreck; so that the only security for the harmony and happiness of the universe is the submission of all individual will to *thecontrolling will of God*. Therefore:
 5. We see the absolute necessity that God assert His control over His moral creature, and give him His *law* with its two cardinal requirements, "loving God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself," as the only security for the welfare of the universe, and enforce obedience to it with the whole weight of His authority; so that this free moral nature must needs come into conflict with law. Therefore we inquire

III. *What is the nature of the Law?*

1. Law is "a decisive rule of action for moral agents." In the divine. government. the law demands the voluntary and unconditional submission of a free moral agent to God's requirements. Doing this, God will make him supremely and eternally happy -- as happy as infinite power, wisdom, and benevolence can make him. But
2. It is also of the nature of *restraint*. Its language is "Thou shalt' 'and "Thou shalt not." It requires him to seek, not his own way, but God's way. God's will must be his sole guide. Therefore
3. To *give up* independence of action and submit to restraint, which oftentimes involves the giving up of *objects* in themselves desirable, can not be an easy matter. It must cost a struggle. It is going against inclination - practising self-denial. And this must be attended with reluctance, and a reluctance just proportioned to the love of independence. By just so much as he loves his own way, by just so much he must make an effort in order to surrender it. But,
4. It is his highest *duty* to surrender it, and consent to be guided, governed, and *restrained*, if need be, as God may see fit, as the only security for the harmony and welfare of the universe, which requires the merging of all wills in the one controlling will of the Almighty.

IV. Here then we find THE ORIGIN OF SIN

Not a *good* reasons for it, for that is impossible; but an *occasion* of it -- a reason *why* it is committed. We trace it to the *necessary nature of free agency* -- to the love of conscious freedom in a free moral agent, coming into conflict with the necessary restraints of *law and government* -- as Paul says "I had not known sin but *by the Law*." (Rom. vii :7.)

In this view it is a mere innocent *occasion* of sin, as the natural appetite for food is the innocent occasion of sinful gluttony.

The occasion of sin is thus seen to be *inseparable from free agency under the restraint of law*; and some particulars respecting it are deserving of special notice.

1. It lies back of voluntary action, and is therefore destitute of moral character -- a mere constitutional element. Therefore,
2. It is not at all of the nature of depravity, nor does it imply any defect in the original constitution, and is consistent with perfect innocence, and even holiness. Christ was "tempted in *all points* like as we are, yet without sin."
3. In this view every being in the universe who sins, whether man or devil, sins *solely* because he dislikes the restraint of law, and shrinks from the self-denial necessary to obedience. This is the *occasion* of the sin. The real sin, and where all the *guilt* centers, is the disobedience itself -- the *act* of transgression, the *determination* to break the law and *have* his own way, in exact accordance with the way in which the *prophet* describes human sinfulness--"We *have turned every one to His OWN WAY.*" (Is. liii :6.)
4. The leading peculiarity of this view is that it represents the occasion of sin as *inseparable* from a free nature under this necessary restraint of law, and belongs therefore to a moral being by virtue of his creation; and is as inseparable from the soul as freedom itself. Therefore,
5. It belongs necessarily to the nature of *all* moral beings who either 'have been or can be created; and therefore *all* newly-created beings forever, will have the same inclination at the outset of their being, to throw off the restraints of law and government, that has already broken out in the sinning angels and men.

Evidently if a moral being would live in harmony with God, he must submit to Him. And this requires that he give up his own will. But to do this costs him a tremendous struggle. It is the hardest thing for him to do in the whole range of his mental activity. There is nothing to which he clings with such tenacity as his own will, and nothing that he so shrinks from surrendering. And exactly here do we find the Origin of Sin, viz., in the utter unwillingness, even the downright and desperate repugnance of a free, moral agent, conscious of his freedom, and loving to exercise it, to give up his own will.

The *law* may be a mere imperative of the reason and the conscience, or it may be a command rightly imposed by another, to whose rightfulness, however, the reason assents; but in either case it is *law*, coming down upon a moral being with the demand of obedience to rightful authority. In the former case the individual becomes, in the language of the apostle, "*a law unto himself*, his conscience also bearing witness. (Rom. ii:15.~ In the latter he comes under the authority of another--a parent, guardian, master, or ruler; and the sin resulting is always disobedience to rightful authority--to *law*. Sin is ever therefore "the transgression of the *law*." "Where no *law* is there is no transgression." (Rom. iv:15.)

With the existence and operation of this element in human society we are all familiar. The inclination of the whole world is to *its own pleasure*. The very first development of the infant mind is in the direction of impatience of restraint-he wants *his own way*. This is the leading characteristic of childhood also, and is what creates the necessity of parental authority in the family. This is the chief trouble in the community - that men want *their own way*, instead of seeking the *general* good. This, too, makes government necessary in the state; and even on the broad field of national experience the sole occasion of difficulty is the preference of the individual over the general good. "*For all seek their own,*" is the grand trouble of the universe. (Phil. ii:21.)

This view of the *occasion of sin*, is one whose importance can hardly be over-estimated. The fact that *all* created beings, from their very nature, shrink from the restraints of law, and are, on that account, inclined to sin, is the distinguishing feature of the system herein developed, and furnishes the key, it is believed, to the right understanding of the moral universe. And even as the law of gravitation is the key which unlocks the grand secrets of the material universe, and gives the reason for its beauty, order, and harmony, so the key which unlocks the grand secrets of the moral universe, and gives the reason for all in it that is discordant and jarring and troublesome, will be found to be this *universal* tendency of free mind to resist law, and thus to break away from the great controlling center - God. It is this that ruined the angels, that made the human race a sinful one, that made redemption necessary, and is the grand obstacle to the unfolding of the moral universe, in the coming ages, in righteousness and true holiness, and which can be surmounted only by the infinite energies of the Almighty.

SEC. 3. *Objections.*

To this representation of the origin of sin it may be objected

I. That, if this dislike of restraint be a *necessary* element in the nature of a moral being, then its indulgence is a matter of course, and not to be wondered at; and that a moral being can not be *blamed* for indulging it. Answer:

This objection overlooks the essential elements of a free nature; for while it is true that the love of conscious freedom, and the consequent dislike of restraint belong necessarily to the nature of a free moral agent, yet so also do *reason* and *conscience* and *the sense of moral* obligation belong as truly and inseparably to such a nature; and the free moral agent is as free to follow one as the other.

And between 'these two, the inclination and the reason, stands the imperial will regnant in the realm of its own activity, and deciding ever *for itself* which of the two it will follow, the love of freedom, and thus commit sin, or the reason and judgment and thus act rightly.

And here it should be noticed that whenever it rejects the demands of reason, and follows the inclination of self-indulgence, it always acts *against the higher motive*, and yields to the *lower*; and in so doing, stifles within itself the sense of

moral obligation, debases its lofty nature, and commits an act of inexcusable wickedness.

To illustrate -- A religiously educated businessman listens to a sermon from the text "Seek first the kingdom of God." The message comes to him backed by the authority of the Almighty, and he so accepts it. It is distinctly before his mind not only as the higher motive, but the highest motive in the universe. And on being questioned he would acknowledge it to be such. He listens to the sermon, and acknowledges its truthfulness. And yet he will refuse to be effectually moved by it, and persist still in his life of worldliness and sin.

The entire preceding view of the nature and operations of a human soul in the matter of sinful self-indulgence, is 'comprehended in the single word *self-denial*. To show this, let the word be carefully analyzed.

1. In the act of self-denial, there is a conscious some-thing to be repressed. And it belong to *me*. It is a part of my moral nature-a something in me pleading for self-indulgence. In familiar language-it *wants its own way*.
2. Something within me says that I ought not to yield to it-that to yield to it would be wrong, and to refuse to yield to it would be commendable and right. Thus some part of my moral nature commands me not to yield to another part of my moral nature.
3. I feel and know that there is a power within me qualifying me to do this-qualifying me to stand up *against* this internal inclination and to refuse to gratify it I know I can say to it, "Get thee behind me. I will not yield to thee. I will do right. I will reject the temptation, and trample on it."
4. If I use this conscious power, and stand up against this temptation, I stand up against myself. One part of myself exercises authority over another part of myself; and demands of it obedience. Myself denies myself. Hence, the expression self-denial.
 - The mind appears, therefore, to move in this three -- fold direction -- the direction of the inclination, the judgment, and the will.

There is an inclination to choose my own way of self-indulgence.

There is a judgment deciding that the indulgence of the inclination - the yielding to it - would be wrong.

There is the imperial will determining to follow the judgment instead of the inclination and all this is the simple analysis of the word *self-denial*.

- When, therefore, rightful authority meets a moral being to which he feels disinclined to yield, reason and conscience pass him at once to *resist* this love of independence, this temptation, this drawing away of his own lust, and submit to the requirement. And if he would but resist it' as he

might do, and as God commands him to do-as the devil might have done, and Adam might have done, and both should have done -- not only would there be no sin in him, but he would merit the commendation, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." But if he yields to it, he sins, and assumes the entire responsibility of the wrong-doing. He is never any more excusable in yielding to this occasion than is the glutton in his gluttony. Who would excuse a man for acting like a beast?

And if he yields, he is perfectly *free* in so doing. For were there anything in the inclination or impulse which *deter-mined* the will of the moral being-any thing in it of a *compulsory* nature - there would be no explanation of that *remorse* which rends the guilty soul.

REMORSE, is the soul upbraiding itself for its sin; and wherever felt, is its own clear testimony to three things:

1. That the sin committed was wholly *unnecessary*. Could a convicted soul, in the extremity of its torment from remorse, see and feel that back of its wickedness there lay a *necessity* under which it acted, the remorse would cease at once. It would instantly clear itself from blame and from mental suffering by the reflection, "I could not help it," and be at peace. There would no longer be ground for remorse, or the possibility of it. There might be any amount of *regret* at the unpleasant consequences which have followed, but there could be no self-reproach at being the guilty *author* of those consequences, and this is the essential ingredient in remorse.
 2. Remorse is the soul's testimony that the sinful conduct was *inexcusable*. If in certain complicated cases of human action there are some things which appear excusable, and others not, the remorse reaches only those which are seen to be *inexcusable*, and keeps exact pace with the inexcusableness. Whatever is seen to be excusable, ceases to distress. Self-reproach extends only to that for which the soul can find no *good excuse*.
 3. The testimony of the soul under remorse is, that in the precise circumstances in which it acted wrong, it should have acted *exactly the other* way-either not to do what it did, or to do that which it neglected to do. Observe-The conviction of the remorseful soul is that there should have been an entire change in the conduct, *with no change in the circumstances*. It blames itself for acting as it *did*, the circumstances remaining *as they were*; thus giving its own highest testimony to its own *perfect freedom*.
- However wicked men may reason against *their* own freedom and responsibility, one *pang* of remorse within them gives the lie to all their assumptions against it, dissipates all their sophistries, and arraigns them at the bar of their own consciences as being guilty and deserving of punishment for not acting exactly the opposite way from what they did act, and with *no change of circumstances*. And this is freedom-freedom in

choice, power of *contrary* choice -- FREEDOM OF WILL, absolute and unqualified.

This element in a moral nature, therefore, this love of conscious freedom, this occasion of sin although constitutional, and necessarily belonging to free agency, is yet one that should ever be kept in subordination to the highest law of reason and conscience -- that law which demands that God be obeyed at any cost of sacrifice and self-denial.

And the example of the Savior, who was "made in all things" like as we are, and "tempted in all points like as we are," has demonstrated that it *can* be and *ought* to be kept in subordination. *He* said, "not my will but Thine be done." And so ought every moral being in God's universe to say when brought to the trial-"not my will but Thine be done;" and there is no manner of excuse why he should not. Because he *can* give up his own will any way, he *can* go against his inclinations, and ought ever to do thus when reason and con-science demand it, even as did the Savior. But it will ever be with a struggle at the outset. "Not my will"⁹ is the strait gate through which every soul must pass at the threshold of moral action; and He who said it "left us an example," and left it to the universe too-"that we should' follow His steps *who* did no *sin*." (I Pet. ii:21, 22.)

The assumption not infrequently made, that Christ resisted temptation and remained holy by virtue of his divine nature; or because he received extra divine assistance over and above what we receive, is an assumption wholly unauthorized.

1. The Scripture nowhere teach such a doctrine. In the account of his temptation in the wilderness, we find no evidence of supernatural help. The ministration of the angels granted for His relief and comfort in His bitter conflict, was not furnished till the temptation was ended; and the "heirs to salvation" are favored with this same supernatural assistance of the ministering angels.
2. The record of his temptation show Him resisting the assaults of the adversary simply by opposing to his suggestions the declarations of the Scriptures; in which there is n~ evidence of superior divine assistance.
3. The clear statement of the Bible, that He was "made in all things like unto His brethren," and was "tempted in all points like as they are" is a declaration of little significance for us in the hour of temptation, provided that, for any reason, He had a better opportunity for resisting temptation, and thus remaining holy, than we have.
4. He is distinctly held up as an example for our imitation, and we are exhorted to be sinless because He was (I Pet. ii :21.23); and where is the force of such an exhortation if the possibilities of resistance, on our part, were not equally favorable with His? The entire argument of the apostle in Heb. ii:10-18 and iv:14-16, fails of being satisfactory the moment we assume', for the Savior, superior advantages to ours for remaining holy. If His temptations were less severe than ours; or if his human nature derived

superior strength from a union with the divine; or if a greater measure of the Spirit were imparted; or any divine assistance furnished of which we are deprived, then is there no reasonableness in the exhortation to us to remain holy because He did. Also, if at this point, He was lifted out of the plane of human experience and translated into that of the divine, he is no longer one who can sympathize with us in our temptations merely on the ground of having been "Himself tempted," which is the ground presented.

- There is, indeed, no ground for any other belief than that every disadvantage which human nature now has in the conflict with temptation, Christ had; and on the other hand, that every advantage He had for resisting temptation, and remaining holy, human nature now has; so that the fact that He remained true to God and duty is proof that every human being should do the same.

On the whole, therefore, *every sin* in *God's universe* whenever or wherever, or by whomsoever committed is, and must be, in the very nature of the case who fly inexcusable, and deserving of unqualified condemnation. For he who does wrong, and rejects the binding authority of reason and conscience, commits an act second only in criminality, both as respects its nature and influence, to a departure from moral rectitude on the part of God Himself. And well may God say to him, "Be ye therefore perfect EVEN as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." "Be ye holy FOR I am holy." It is objected:

II. That Adam in the garden obeyed God for some considerable time after his creation, and therefore, could not have had in him, *at the outset*, any such occasion of sin as is now insisted on. Answer:

- Many, and indeed most of our theologians lavish upon Adam, previous to his fall, groundless commendations, calling him not only innocent and sinless but *holy*; "heart full of holiness," "loving all that God loved," (self-denial?), "spontaneous to good," in short, a perfect pattern of obedience and *holiness* at the very outset - at the very time of his creation. They do not see apparently, that created holiness is an absurdity -- that as no sin is possible but by a "*transgression* of the law" so no holiness is possible but by *obedience* to law, and that Adam, when created, was only *innocent*, not holy. Thus they make no distinction between innocence and holiness between the obedience that costs no self-denial and the obedience that submits to God under a fair trial, and thus use, in respect to A4m, language applicable only to a being *confirmed* in obedience.

All the character Adam had earned previous to his fall was earned only by' obedience to commands which crossed none of his natural inclinations, and cost him no self-denial -- the law of marriage and the Sabbath, and the command to dress and keep the garden. No commands had been imposed which interfered at all with his pleasure -- his inclinations; and the commendation so often lavished upon him for his goodness, obedience and *holiness*, are groundless. It was a goodness that *cost* nothing, and was worth as little. Good as far as it went, but of

very inferior value, because existing in a heart in which there was no settled *principle* of obedience.

But to the point in question: How could obedience in such circumstances prove that he had no constitutional disinclination to submit to the proper and necessary restraints of law and authority? The fact was that no sooner was he *crossed* than he refused to obey. No sooner did he find that the tree was "good for food, and a tree to be desired to make one wise," than his love of *having his own way* overpowered all other considerations, and in the face of commands and warnings and threatenings, and reason and conscience, broke out in open rebellion against restraint; and that, too, in so insignificant a matter as the possession of a single tree when allowed freely to partake of all the other trees of the garden. Certainly his recorded experience, so far as it goes, proves only the truth of our position -- that the occasion of sin is common to *all* moral beings.

It is objected:

III. That this position assumes a similar element in the human nature of Christ. Answer:

- The Scriptures themselves teach this. Christ is declared to have been "*made in all things like a. we are,*" and to have been "*tempted in all points like as we are*" (Heb. 2:17; 4:15), and how could this be unless He had the same constitutional inclinations that we have? Also it says He "*pleased not Himself*" (Rom. 15:3); consequently went against His pleasure - His natural inclinations - consequently denied Himself, showing that He had inclinations which *needed* to be denied, just as we have. *Had* He "*pleased Himself,*" and followed His inclinations, as we do, He would have sinned; but He said rather, "*Not my will, but thine be done.*" By "*will*" is here meant wish, or inclination; and His inclination He resisted. And this inclination was precisely the same inclination which leads us to sin, and would have lead Him to sin had He not resisted it. At this' point, therefore, He was indeed tempted precisely as we are, and therefore had in Him the same inclination to resist the necessary restraints of law and government, which we and all moral beings have. It is objected again:

IV. That as moral 'beings are made "in God's image," V the foregoing position will necessitate self-denial on the part of the Almighty. True; and obedience to the great law of benevolence, to which He also is subject, does call for self-denial even on His part. God even claims it for Himself, when He says, "*He doth not afflict willingly.*" Therefore, by just so much as He does not, must He repress the immediate promptings of His pitiful nature, and because the highest good demands it, deny Himself, and still continue the infliction. Again, He is "*not willing* that any should perish;" and by just so much as He is not willing, must He repress the strong impulses of affection for the creature He has made; and because the general good demands the maintenance of His law and government inviolate, must He still deny Himself and punish him as he deserves.

Moreover the giving of His own son to sufferings and death, was an act of infinite self-denial.

- Thus in the mutual relations of moral beings, self-denial for the general good has become *the law of the universe*. "If any man will come after me, let him *deny himself*" (Matt. xvi :24), is undoubtedly not merely the law of this world, but of all worlds. Even God does not exempt himself from self-denial; and he, therefore, who refuses to practice it, and thus remain true to God and duty, assails the universal welfare, disobeys the Almighty, follows the promptings of his own self-will, and deserves the uttermost of condemnation.

There is, therefore, no valid objection to the position we, are assuming - that the occasion of sin is common to the nature of *all* moral beings who either have been or can be created.

HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY

This doctrine, as held generally in our evangelical churches, is-That mankind have become sinful on account of some kind of a connection with sinful Adam, so that the sinfulness of the race is to be traced to this connection. The obvious objection to this view is that, as God is the author of this connection, it represents Him as acting to perpetuate sin. It seems desirable, therefore, that, if possible, some other and better view should be substituted.

It is proposed in this book to substitute in the place of this, the view which has just been presented-that the sinfulness of mankind, as well as of all sinful beings, is to be traced to the love of conscious freedom in a free moral agent, coming into conflict with the necessary restraints of law and government; and that this characteristic of a moral nature belongs to *all* moral beings who either have been or can be created.

The doctrine of Hereditary Depravity fails, in several respects, of being satisfactory

1. HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE

The ancient doctrine, as taught by AUGUSTINE in the fifth century, was the result of mere human speculation. It was assumed that souls, like bodies, are propagated from parent to child.

This is the doctrine of the Assembly's catechism, and which was finally crystallized in New England in that familiar couplet of the primer-"In Adam's fall We sinned all."

This is the ancient and proper doctrine of "ORIGINAL SIN."

This made two kinds of sin-one committed before we were' born and the other after. The first was called "original," and the second "actual." The first made men sinners "by nature," the second "by practice."

But the doctrine has been greatly modified by theologians subsequently, so that there have been as many as six statements of it among Calvinistic theologians which differ radically from each other.

PRES. EDWARDS differs from Augustine and Calvin in that he rejects the propagation of souls entirely, but holds to a "divinely constituted union between Adam and his posterity, by which his sin becomes theirs." According to AUGUSTINE we are guilty at birth because *we* ate the forbidden fruit. According to EDWARDS, because *God determined* that Adam's sin should be ours.

The PRINCETON DIVINES reject all coexistence with Adam, or any real guilt on account of his sin; but hold still that God regards and treats us as *if* we were guilty. Says DR. HODGE: "Adam's act was *regarded* as our act," he being, in this view, a kind of representative of the human race and related to us by a sort of "federal headship." Here is another change. EDWARDS and CALVIN both held that we were guilty of Adam's sin though in different ways; but PRINCETON, only that we are treated as *if* we were. This theory is called Imputation; and which STUART, with a kind of grim facetiousness, characterizes as "fictitious guilt, but veritable damnation."

Many New England theologians have made another change, and teach, not that we are guilty of Adam's sin in *any* sense; but only that we inherit from him a *sinful disposition* (*vide* Wood's Essay). MULLER also says: "The individual has a *sinful nature* from his birth."

Others make another change and say that the disposition is not really *sinful*, but only that we are depraved, corrupt, disordered at birth from our connection with Adam and on this account grow up *to be* sinful. The Presbyterian Confession calls it "a corrupted nature."

At this point two of our profoundest modern theologians -- Drs. MULLER and FAIRBAIRN -- are entirely at variance. MULLER says not only that "the individual has a sinful nature at birth," as quoted above, but that "hereditary sin makes every man, from the outset of his life, actually *guilty* in God's sight and exposes him to eternal condemnation."

On the other hand, FAIRBAIRN says that this inherited sinfulness "is *not* transgression, and is *without* guilt."

At this point, too, there is another difference between distinguished theologians, some, like STUART, holding that the stream of moral pollution, originating in Adam, has flowed to the human race through the mental channel; others, like PRES. APPLETON, that its channel has been through the physical connection.

DR. DWIGHT says he is unable to explain it, and confesses he has seen "no explanation which did not leave the difficulties as great, and, for ought I know, as numerous as they were before."

DR. TAYLOR narrows down the doctrine to this-. "I take only this general position as that, and that only, which the Scriptures authorize-that the sinfulness of mankind is in *consequence* of Adam's sin.

DR. EDWARD BEECHER sweeps even this away, and declares that "the doctrine that our depraved natures, or our sinful conduct, have been caused or occasioned by the sin of Adam, is not asserted in any part of the Word of God." Also, he declares that "all attempts to explain the connection between the sin of Adam and the ruin of his posterity have been so unsatisfactory as to create a violent presumption that the idea is, in itself, incapable of vindication or defense." And PRES. FAIRCHILD, in the *Advance* of Sept-16, 1869, makes this very significant statement: "The doctrine of the Fall, in its relation to human depravity, is confessedly an *open question*." And, perhaps, among all our modern theologians there has not been a more conservative man or a more close and careful thinker than PRES. FAIRCHILD.

ARMINIAN VIEWS

Such are the views of some of the leading Calvinistic theologians. Let us notice the position of a few of the more distinguished of the ARMINIAN DIVINES.

Says ARMINIUS: "All those will be saved who have not themselves committed actual transgressions;" thus utterly rejecting the doctrine that infants would be lost.

WESLEY, in the early part of his life, had embraced the Augustinian theology, for he says: "By the sin of the first Adam we all became children of wrath." Again: "We were all born with a sinful, devilish nature." But in subsequent years he appears to have entirely changed his theological position, for he says, in his later writings: "Nothing is sin, strictly speaking, but a voluntary transgression of a known law of God."

Notice here the word "known," plainly implying that there is no sin, nor the possibility of it, until the age of *intelligent* responsibility was reached.

Evidently, in his estimation, it was not necessarily heresy for a man to change his theological opinions on this point. It may not be heresy to advance a step further, and adopt our explanation.

Says WATSON: "Little children, until actual sin, remain heirs of eternal glory." *Remain* thus-that is, they are heirs of glory from the mere fact of their creation by God, and *remain* so till actual sin.

Says DR. ADAM CLARK: "Christ loves little children because He loves simplicity and *innocence*."

Says LIMBORCH: "Infants have a certain inclination to sin which they derive, not from Adam, but from their next immediate parents." In this view he would apparently make

the depravity of men to run back to Adam for its *prime* origin, while he would still reject the theory of Augustine, that the entire race existed in Adam.

FLETCHER probably phrases the prevalent belief correctly when he says: "As Adam brought a general condemnation and a universal seed of death (notice, he does not say *sin*) upon all, so Christ brings upon them a general justification and a universal seed of life." To this we add, that if these results of God's visitation upon men for the sin of Adam, as Fletcher represents them, are not to be regarded as a *calamity*, there can be no objection to the above statement; but, according to the general belief, they are. STUART'S view, as he distinctly states it - and which is only implied in the above quotation from FLETCHER -- is that the connection with Adam is a *calamity*, and that the atonement of Christ comes in as a "*Compensation*" to *make up* for these previously inflicted evils and calamities -- this "general condemnation." But if so, then God was under *obligation* to provide the atonement; and how, then, is it a purely *gracious* dispensation--a *dorea en kariti*, as the apostle terms it, and which God was under *no* obligation to men to bestow.

2. SCRIPTURE ARGUMENT

The way *sin* was proved by the old divines to have descended from Adam was by making the death spoken of in Rom. v include death *spiritual* as well as temporal.

The refutation of this exegesis by DR. BEECHER in his "*Conflict of Ages*" is exhaustive and unanswerable. He shows that this interpretation is not found in the early fathers; was not given to the passage till the fourth century; was never adopted by the Greek Church at all; and, moreover, is entirely at variance with the design and scope of the argument.

But, if the doctrine of sin derived from Adam is not taught in Rom. v, then it is not a doctrine of the Bible; for, as DR. BEECHER says: "If these things (depravity and disorder at birth) are not asserted *in this passage* to have been caused by the sin of Adam, then plainly they are not asserted to have been caused by it at all in any part of the Word of God; for there is no other passage of Scripture in which it can even be pretended with any show of probability whatever that these things are asserted."

EXEGESIS OF ROMANS V 12-19

The only argument of any weight for making the *death* spoken of in this passage include *spiritual* as well as temporal death, is that it stands in contrast with the word *life* in v.17; and as the latter evidently means spiritual and eternal life, therefore, the former must mean spiritual and eternal death. Answer:

This assumes that Paul, in comparing the respective works of Adam and of Christ, is intending to make a formal comparison -- to run a careful and exact parallel between the two, so that what is said of the work of the one shall find an exact counterpart in the work of the other. But this assumption is utterly without foundation.

Now, let a view be taken diametrically the opposite of this. Let it be assumed with equal, and even superior, probability that the mind of the apostle in its rapid and intense workings discerning a *certain* correspondence between the works of Adam and of Christ, so that one might properly be considered in some respects a type (*tupos*) of the other, is catching merely at those *points* of comparison in which the two illustrate each other more or less perfectly, with no thought of an *exact* correspondence - a rigid and formal comparison - and the entire argument falls to the ground. Certainly this is his manner of writing elsewhere. Witness the corresponding passage in 1 Cor. xv: 45-49- the only other passage in which Adam and Christ are compared.

The first Adam was made "a living soul," the last Adam was "a quickening spirit."

The first was "natural," the last "spiritual."

The first was "earthly," the last "heavenly."

Those who are earthly are like Adam; those who are heavenly are like Christ.

Now, to assume that the apostle was running a careful and exact parallel between the works of Adam and of Christ in this passage would be absurd. For example, assume that the expression "a living soul" was intended precisely to correspond with "a quickening spirit," and then undertake to ascertain the exact meaning of the one from the other, and the absurdity becomes apparent. No, in both passages the apostle is evidently catching only at *points* of resemblance more or less obvious, and thus the word *death* in Rom. v need not be pressed to an exact fullness of meaning with the word *life*, and *allows*, at least, of limitation to *temporal* death.

- Verse 19 -- '*were made sinners.*'

This verse, as it stands in our translation, teaches Universalism out and out; for the unqualified statement is that as all "were made sinners" by Adam, so all shall be made righteous by Christ; and if "*were made*" really means what the words imply, that all men actually become sinners through Adam, then all men must actually become righteous through Christ, and Universalism is the logical result.

Now, the word translated "were made" occurs in the New Testament *twenty-one* times. In all the other places where Paul uses it it means to ordain or appoint as a ruler, conductor, overseer, judge, elder, or priest; but in no other one of them does it mean "were made," as here translated. And in neither of the *other three* places where it is used by other New Testament writers does it necessarily need the translation "were made.," The exact meaning of the word is to put, place, or lay down-that is, to *put in a position*; and the meaning of the statement in v.19, which seems the most natural, is this -- That as all are made subject to temporal death for Adam's sin, and are so far put *in the position* of sinners for his sake, so by the obedience of Christ, all are *put in the position* of the righteous so far as to receive with them the benefits of Christ's redemption -- the offer of pardon and the blessings of probation.

A condensed summary of the entire passage is as follows:

First -- The apostle says (v.12) that by one man sin entered into the world, and death entered by it, and so' death passed upon all men - that is, the condemning sentence of temporal death was passed upon the entire race for Adam's sin. "In Adam all *die*." (1 Cor. xv:22). "By one man's offense *death reigned*" -- that is, the mortality which Adam in -- cursed by sinning was transmitted, by God's arrangement, to the entire race.

In other words, God determined that Adam, inasmuch as he had become mortal by sinning, should beget only mortal descendants. Hence the statement, "As in Adam all die." (1 Cor. xv:22.)

Secondly-He represents the work of Christ as equaling, and even in some respects surpassing, in its effects the results of Adam's sin. For example -

V.15. By one, death comes to all; by One grace abounds to *all*.

V.16. The judgment - the condemning sentence of temporal death -- follows "*one*" offense; the "free gift" follows "*many*."

V.17. By one sinner, and he a mere man, death *temporal* reigns; much more by the Infinite Savior, the elect shall reign in life *eternal*.

V.18. By "one offense" (Greek) all come under a condemning sentence of temporal death; by "one righteousness" (Greek) all come under a provision designed and adapted for justification unto life.

V.19. As, therefore, by the disobedience of one all are put in the position of "sinners" (by thus suffering temporal death for his sin), so, by the obedience of One, all are put in the position of the "righteous" (by the blessings they enjoy in common with them).

V.20. This verse should be especially noticed in its bearings on the doctrine of hereditary depravity. In v.12 sin entered (*eiselthe*) and death entered by it. Now, v.20, the law (*pareiselthen*) *entered in addition*, so that (as a consequence) the fall (*paraptoma*) "abounded" - filled up, extended, filled up the world; but grace met even this additional exigency, so that even where "sin abounded grace super-abounded."

[NOTE-If we are to believe that the fall extended beyond Adam-"abounded"-embraced the race for the reason that his descendants *were connected with him*, then here in this 20th verse, if anywhere, we should expect that doctrine would be stated. But this verse says nothing about it, and only mentions, as the occasion of this universal sinfulness, that the *law* came in-either natural or revealed, or both -- implying that men now become sinners just as Adam did, by an intelligent

transgression of it; no allusion being made directly or indirectly to *him* as the occasion of this universal sinfulness.]

V.21. That as sin hath reigned *in* or *with* death temporal (*en to thanato*) meaning, perhaps, in *connection with it* -- attended by it -- and commensurate in *extent* with it, so might grace reign through righteousness unto life eternal -- that is, sin reigns unto death temporal, while grace reigns unto life eternal. Thus the apostle shows that, at every point, the system of Grace through Christ had transcended in blessings to mankind the entire train of evils that had come upon the race from the sin of Adam.

3. ARGUMENT FROM REASON

But it is asserted on the ground of *reason* that human sinfulness is derived from Adam. It *appears*, it is said, that the child inherits the depraved constitution of the parent, and, therefore, that depravity is thus handed down from parent to child, and hence must run back finally to a depraved ancestor for its origin. Answer:

The child inherits from the parent *four things*; not always, but generally:

1. *Physical* peculiarities, as of feature and complexion.
2. *Mental* peculiarities, as of strength or weakness or aptitude for particular studies.
3. Peculiarities of *disposition*; willful and headstrong parents generally having similarly constituted children.
4. *Depraved tastes* also, like the appetite in the parent for intoxicating drink, or any other vicious indulgence.

But the *primary* occasion of sin, as we have seen, lies back of all these in the constitutional nature of the moral being; and this occasion is only *modified* in its external manifestations by the parental connection; so that all we know with certainty respecting this matter is that parental peculiarities are apt to determine what particular *form* the sin of the child shall take--that is, no matter who or what the parents may be, the child will certainly sin, and the sin be sure to take some form; but the *peculiar* form is very apt to be determined by the mental and physical habits of either or both parents, so that the *form* of sin, and not the *sin itself*, is all that can rightly be charged to parental connection. Adam, and the angels both sinned without any depraved ancestor; and a child, with no parental connection, were the thing possible, or placed in any other possible circumstances at this stage of the creation than those in which he is placed, would undoubtedly do the same.

4. THE HYPOTHESIS NOT TO BE ENTERTAINED

The doctrine, therefore, that men sin from a connection with Adam, is taught neither by Reason nor Revelation, and is a mere hypothesis of human invention to account for the certainty and universality of human sinfulness. And now regarding it as an hypothesis merely, it is useless, unreasonable, mischievous, and every way objectionable.

1. It is *useless*. For the sole value of an hypothesis lies in its accounting for facts. Now, we have *three* facts or instances of sin—the angels, Adam, and ourselves; and the hypothesis accounts only for *our* sin, leaving the other two instances with no explanation whatever. And what is an hypothesis worth that explains only *one-third* of the facts?
2. It is *unreasonable*. Much confusion has arisen in theological discussion from not properly discriminating between human *nature* and human *character*. Men often say that human *nature* is bad when they only mean human *character*.

Now, properly speaking, human nature is what *God* makes men to be by virtue of their creation. Human character is what men make *themselves* to be by their own acting.

Human nature God makes "*in His own image*." "Men made' after the similitude of God." (James iii:9.) Human character men make *after another pattern*; as our Savior said: "Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." (John viii :44.)

Human *nature*, therefore, or what men are at birth is Godlike; human *character*, or what men make themselves afterward, is *devilish*.

1. *Human nature*. This is the nature God gives men. That men are made "after the similitude of God" means that they have powers of thinking, feeling, and acting -- an intellect to know and understand God, sensibilities wherewith to love Him, and a will to choose His service. This is God's image in the soul. This is the nature God gives every moral being, and for whatever a man has in him at *birth* God alone is responsible. Therefore, to say, as some do, that men are born sinful -- that they have at birth a "sinful nature" -- is to trace that sinful nature directly to the Almighty, and make Him its responsible author. Moreover, it is a statement so absurd in itself that nothing can be more so. For if a man is *born* a sinner, then he can not *avoid* being a sinner; and, if he cannot avoid it, then he is not to blame for it; and if he is not to blame for it, then he is *innocent*; and we have the manifest absurdity of a sinful innocence, or an innocent sinfulness. With the same propriety might we speak of an honest thief or a truthful liar.

Also, "sin is the transgression of the law;" and how can a being transgress a law when too immature and undeveloped even to know what law is?

Others, therefore, would not say that the infant was born *sinful*, but only that he inherits a depraved nature, because he will certainly mm by and by. And such often speak of the infant' in terms of reprobation, calling him "a little viper," for example, only undeveloped as yet. This is wicked. It is traducing God'. image in the soul.

There is no reason for calling the infant depraved be-cause he *will* sin any more than there would have been for calling Adam depraved before his fall. Such statement respecting the infant are unreasonable, There is no *depravity* in any being but such as

results from responsible sinning; and no other sinful *character* is possible but such as results from an intelligent and willful transgression of the law of God; and the idea of inherited sinfulness, or even inherited depravity, as the expression is generally understood, violates our necessary ideas of moral and responsible action.

1. *Human character.* This is ever the result of intelligent, voluntary, and responsible choice. This every man creates for himself by voluntarily choosing; and when carried out into action is called *conduct*, and no true character is possible before this intelligent *choice*. A good character is the result of obedience to law, and a bad character is the result of disobedience to law; and no other moral character is possible or conceivable. Created holiness or created sinfulness is, therefore, an absurdity. And when theologians say, as they often do, that Adam was *created* holy, they use language with no intelligible meaning. A moral being, at the time of his creation, can only be *innocent*.

3. *It is mischievous.*

1. It impugns the *benevolence* of God. The very first question of theology is, "who made you?" Answer, "God." And He made me *as I am*, so that everything in me at birth is *His work*, even all the consequences of parental sinfulness. This He claims. "I visit the iniquities of the parents upon children." Therefore, for all that is in us at birth God alone is responsible, and if *depravity* be inherited, then is He its responsible author. And how can such an arrangement be reconciled with infinite and perfect benevolence? Every Christian shrinks from saying that God is the responsible author of *depravity*.
2. It hinders the Spirit's work of conviction of sin. If men under conviction of sin are taught that they are born with a depravity, or tendency to sin, or hindrances in themselves to right living and acting, of which God is the responsible author, the very next thought is that they are not *entirely* to blame for their sinful *conduct*. They must be, to some extent, excusable. And the writer has known lamentable instances where conviction of sin has been thus stifled. Is it said in reply that powerful revivals of religion have occurred under such preaching? Granted, but only in spite of it, and through the influence of other Bible truth which the Spirit could use. Revivals have increased in number and in power where such doctrines have been omitted in preaching.
3. It embarrasses the doctrine of the true *humanity* of Christ. The Scriptures teach that Christ was "made in *all things*" like us: and if we inherit depravity at birth, then He did; and we never say that Christ inherited *depravity*.
4. It has a calamitous bearing upon the doctrine of *Future Punishment*. It is believed that the wave of Universalism that is now sweeping over the Orthodox Churches, and threatening to overwhelm the system of evangelical faith, is due, to a very great extent, to the general belief in this doctrine of *Hereditary Depravity*.

To hold and teach in the first place that God has connected the human race with a depraved ancestor, by virtue of which connection He pours one stream of moral pollution down through the entire race, and then, in the very next breath, that He damns men eternally for being sinners -- (and this is precisely the shape in which the doctrine lies in the minds of vast numbers of professing Christians, even, as it is believed, in the minds of a very large majority)-is so manifestly inconsistent with the dictates of benevolence that men have come to feel quite generally that either the doctrine of Hereditary Depravity, or the doctrine of Endless Punishment *must* be given up; and they have begun all over the land, to give up the latter, and to conclude that the doctrine of Endless Punishment is "intrinsically absurd;" even more, that it is unjust, unreasonable, and inconsistent with the Divine benevolence. And it is believed that the main reason why the members of our Orthodox Churches are, to so great an extent, rejecting the doctrine of *endless punishment* is their belief in this doctrine of *hereditary depravity*.

Here was the miserable starting point of *John Foster*, and which involved his own mind in such inextricable confusion on the doctrine of Future Punishment.

Accepting the teachings of the theologians upon the doctrine of Hereditary Depravity, he says: "But, still, what is man? He comes into this world with a nature fatally corrupt, and powerfully tending to actual evil." And then, again, drawing his views from the same source, he contemplates the Almighty as "bringing of His own sovereign will, a race of creatures into existence in such condition that they certainly will and *must-must* by their nature and circumstances-go wrong."

No wonder that, from such premises, he should say, respecting the doctrine of endless punishment, "I acknowledge my inability to admit this belief, together with a belief in the Divine goodness."

The experience of *Henry Ward Beecher* was similar. In the latter part of his life he rejected the doctrine of Endless Punishment, and he says of himself that the "revolution in his educational belief" was owing to a necessary recoil "from the old scholastic theology which made sin spring from a corrupt nature-a nature corrupted through the fall of Adam." And no wonder that multitudes in our evangelical Churches, starting from the same premises, should conclude that the doctrine in question is irreconcilable with the Divine benevolence; even treat it with ridicule and contempt, and call it "intrinsically absurd." Indeed, there is no alternative. Either the doctrine of Hereditary Depravity, as commonly accepted, must be given up, or else the doctrine of Future Punishment must be given up.

1. *The doctrine is exceedingly objectionable in all respects.*

The Bible declares that God "hates all workers of iniquity," and yet this doctrine represents Him as aiming, at the very outset of the race, to make all mankind just such "workers of iniquity."

He commands men to be *holy*-"*Be ye holy for I am holy,*"-and yet is represented as planning at the outset to have them unholy by connecting them with a depraved ancestor.

He is represented as laying a sure foundation for their sinning, and then commanding them to hate sin and repent of it.

He makes an arrangement which results in bringing the entire race under the power and dominion of sin, and then makes an infinite sacrifice in Redemption to *deliver* them from its power. Many of our distinguished theologians -- STUART, for example-regard the matter in just this light. They hold that the connecting of the race with Adam is, in itself a calamity, and that the Atonement comes in as a *Compensation*" to make up for these previously-inflicted evils and calamities. But if so, then-as has already been said-God was under obligation *to men* to provide an Atonement - not merely under obligation to His own benevolence, but to the sinners themselves. But how, then, is it a purely *gracious* dispensation -- a *dorea en chariti*, as the apostle terms it -- "a gift by grace," a "free gift" (Rom. v.: 15, 16), and which God was under no obligation to *men* to bestow? This robs it of its crowning glory as being a scheme of pure mercy; even it represents the Almighty as inflicting on the race a great calamity, and then making up for His own bad work by the Plan of Redemption.

In brief review of this last point-Hereditary Depravity - let it be added - That to hold that men are born depraved-that they derive their tendency to sin from their connection with sinful Adam, of which connection God is manifestly the responsible author, is to make the doctrine of Endless Punishment logically impossible; and the Churches which have held to *both* doctrines have done so by a logical inconsistency; and John Foster's reasoning from *his premises* was logical and right. Endless Punishment for sin can not, in such circumstances, be rightly inflicted.

Again, Paul says, in Rom. i:18: The *wrath of God* is revealed from heaven against *all* ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." But now to speak of the wrath of God against a man for acting out the very nature *God gave him*, by connecting him with sinful Adam, not only impugns the benevolence of God, but renders the defense of His conduct impossible.

Moreover, this scheme gives a *good* reason for the sin committed, and, therefore cannot be the *true* reason. For Endless Punishment for sin can in no way be made to appear logically consistent with benevolence, except as the *responsibility* for the sin is made to rest *entirely* upon the sinner; and the effort has been in this

chapter to make it thus. And in the view herein presented, when he is arraigned at the bar' of final judgment for his sin, he will be speechless.

5. THE REAL CONSEQUENCES OF ADAM'S SIN TO THE RACE.

1. *Temporal death.* Adam having sinned, an immortality' on earth for him was not desirable; and hence the sentence of temporal death on *him*.

- Then God determined to so connect them with Adam that he should beget only mortal descendants like himself-so that their mortality should be the result of this connection; and thus, all men died *in him*; immortality on earth to *them*, as a sinful race, being as calamitous an arrangement as for Adam; therefore the statement, "As in Adam *all die*" (1 Cor. xv:22)-that is mortality is inherited from mortal Adam.

1. *Physical labor and toil.* "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." (Gen.. iii.19.) And all know that the necessity for continuous *labor* is. one of the greatest blessings to a world of *sinner*s.

2. *Physical evils* of various kinds - pain, suffering, disease, and wretchedness, coming on men, not merely on account of Adam's sin, but the sins of their immediate parentage, and coming thus mainly perhaps, to make men fear sin from seeing its terrible consequences in those they most love.

3. Another consequence of the parental relation to the race is a tendency to indulgence in the same forms of 'sin of which the parent is guilty.

- Now, the point to be especially noticed in respect to all the foregoing results of the parental connection is, that they are to be regarded as the *evil consequences* of sin to the child, and not as the cause of his sin. Not one of them is designed in any way to perpetuate sin, but to hinder it. They are designed by the Almighty to create in the heart of humanity a fear of sin -- a dread to commit it on account of these consequences -- and thus to accumulate *obstacles* in the way of its commission, and bring out in bolder and stronger relief the beauty of *holiness*, "whose ways are pleasantness, and all of whose paths are peace."

The doctrine of Hereditary Depravity has thus been treated at some considerable length because it has such a vital connection with the main design of this book, and we now resume the general subject.

II. Characteristics of Sin.

SEC. I. Sin Is A Wicked Principle of The Heart

1. **A sinful heart is one in which there is a settled determination to have its own will and way, irrespective of the will and pleasure of the Almighty. "The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God. God is**

not in all his thoughts." (Ps. x:4) i.e., not in *any* of his thoughts. Sin is selfishness, and selfishness sacrifices the higher good to its own inferior interests and pleasure; and with this wicked principle within, a man is ready to sacrifice even the interests of God's kingdom whenever they interfere with his own pleasure. But

2. In God's arrangement of this world this selfish principle is under great and constant restraint, and men are to a very great extent, prevented from acting out their selfishness, so that the external conduct even of a wicked man, is oftentimes not dictated by this selfish principle, but by other principles and motives which God has implanted in the very nature of a moral being, and in the workings of human society. God has created a vast amount of moral machinery in this world to *restrain* the outworkings of this selfish principle, and thus to promote human happiness and the general welfare, and secure the beautiful and beneficent results which we see about us. For example, a man can not but have a regard for his own temporal welfare, and his business prosperity; he has necessarily a degree of self respect, a love of approbation—a desire for the good opinion of his fellowmen, the love of justice, the dislike of suffering, and a wish to relieve it; he encounters the relations of domestic life -- the family and the home; he meets the restraints of government in the family, the state, and the nation; the laws and usage's of society, and a constitutional amiability strongly influence him. All these are ever working to obstruct the outbreaking of sin, and to restrain the acting out of the selfish principle within, so that, although a wicked man at heart, his conduct, in the estimation of men, is often praiseworthy, and he is held up as a pattern of goodness and benevolence.

- But all this is God's work, and He only is to be commended for the beautiful and beneficent result which appear in the workings of human society. They are due to workings of the great moral machinery which He has devised and set in operation to make human existence possible, and especially to make this world, notwithstanding human wickedness, a world of mercy and probation. Without these restraints on human selfishness, human life would be unendurable. They are all God's restraint upon the outworkings of human depravity. Nevertheless

1. A man's character, as estimated by the Almighty, is always determined by the ruling principle of the heart in its relations to himself, and not by the external conduct. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the *heart*." If a man has no settled principle of obedience to Him, He cōsiders him wicked throughout; and none of his external commendable acts, as men regard them, are of any account in His estimate of the man's character. Hence, Paul says: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity" -- the principle of love and obedience to God -- "it profiteth me *nothing*." (I Cor. xiii:3.) Men may reckon him good on account of his benevolent acts towards his fellow-men, but God regards him as wicked on account of his being all the while careless and neglectful of his

relations to Him. Notwithstanding this external benevolence, the wicked principle within his heart has not been renounced, and God reckons him a wicked man all the while, and in all his doings. "The *plowing* of the wicked is sin." (Prov. xxi :4) Also his rebellion against Himself represses all other feelings of complacency with his otherwise commendable external conduct. What cares the great central government of a nation whether the head of a rebellion be a good husband, father, and neighbor or not, while he is aiming to destroy the nation, and rend its grand and glorious fabric in pieces? And when arraigned for his treason, who would think of urging his domestic virtues in extenuation of his mighty, public wrong?

2. Hence, all who are not Christians are downright enemies of God. "He that is not *with Me* is *against Me*." (Matt. xii:30.) This divides the whole universe of moral beings into two classes -- the righteous and the wicked. There is no neutral ground. All are downright friends or downright enemies of God, depending wholly on the ruling principle of the heart.

SEC. 2. *This selfish principle exerts a predominating power over the moral nature.*

It not merely exists in it, but so thoroughly dominates it that a free being will do and dare anything before he will give up his own will and way. Illustrations of this are abundant. The rebel angels dared the wrath of God rather than give up their own will and way. Adam in the garden did the same. We witness the same thing now in the rebellion of the child against parental authority. What terrible collision often results! What determination on the part of the child! What desperation-the struggle protracted for hours before the point of yielding is reached. Also take the world over, the last thing men will give up is their own *wills*. Even persons of great constitutional amiability not infrequently find a terrible struggle in submitting to God, and becoming true Christians; while the mass of men will not even attempt submission, and dare the attitude of persistent and life-long rebellion against the Almighty. And this attitude of hostility to God, and resistance to his authority, is not the result of ignorance. The child of pious parents, educated to believe the Bible, and who has never doubted for a moment the doctrine of the endless punishment of the wicked, will go on in sin day after day for years, believing all the while that he is daring by it the wrath of God, and risking his eternal salvation. And he will knowingly incur this infinite danger rather than give up his own will and submit to God.

And so strong is this willful purpose of rebellion, that when long persevered in by wicked men, the Bible likens its surrender to matters of utter impossibility - "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots, then may ye also do good who are *accustomed* to do evil." (Jer. 13:23)

SEC. 3. *The exceeding Sinfulness of Sin*

The mere *inclination* in a moral being to have his own way, is not sin, being inseparable from the nature of a free moral agent; but the sin comes in when that inclination is

followed by a determination to *have* his own way, amounting to an internal and spiritual rebellion against the restraints of God's Law and authority. This is then carried out into action and involves -

1. Disobedience to the commands laid upon him. The command, in the case of the Fallen Angels was perhaps, "not to leave their own habitation;" for this is what in Jude 6, they are declared to have done. In the case of Adam it was, "Thou shalt not eat of the tree," and his sin consisted in a direct disobedience to this plain and positive command. Sin, therefore, involves a direct disobedience to the commands of God. This 'involves -
2. A determination to follow his desires and inclinations-to give up to *self-indulgence* -- to get whatever pleases him regardless of consequences - in short, to put his own inclination and pleasure above every thing else.
3. Also it is a determination not to follow the dictates of *reason and judgment*, which declare to him plainly that the law of God is *right*, that obedience to it is right, and that his best interests and welfare will be secured by yielding this obedience, Also
4. It is a determination not to practice the self-denial necessary to obedience, and which is seen to be reasonable and right; and is, therefore, a determination to put self and self-indulgence above reason, conscience, and God. Also
5. In sinning he stifles the admonitions of conscience-the sense of moral obligation-the feeling that I *ought* to obey, and ought *not* to disobey; thus quenching within himself these sacred monitions.
6. Furthermore -- So long as he refuses to obey God, he not only puts himself *above* Him but in direct *opposition* to Him. He arrays himself in positive and downright hostility to God and in rebellion against His authority. In the language of our Savior in the parable, he declares that he "will not have Him to *reign over him*." (Luke 19:14.)

- And even when convinced of his own sinful conduct, instead of being made humble and repentant in view of it, no other feeling is awakened within him but that of hatred and opposition. And even beyond this, rather than accept the just punishment of his sin, he would hurl the Almighty from his throne, if he had the power; and would actually do it were he not met by Omnipotent Energy.

1. Finally -- Sin assails the very foundations of Law and Government, and aims to subvert the moral order of the universe, and make it one universal scene of disorder, anarchy, and ruin -- in short, a universal Hell. And it would accomplish this result were it not restrained by the infinite energies of the Almighty.

- On the whole, therefore, sin is the determination to have my own way at whatever sacrifice -- even that of God and the universe, and is, therefore, seen to be, in all cases, the outworking of supreme, unmitigated *selfishness*.

These things taken together show what tremendous meaning there is in the declaration of the Apostle, "That sin by the commandment might become *exceeding sinful*." (Rom. 7:13.)

The *Origin of Sin*, therefore, is seen to be as follows:

1. Every moral being is free, conscious of his freedom, and loves to have his own way. But
2. To let him have it, would injure himself, and render the loving companionship of the Almighty, as well as the existence of society in general, impossible. Therefore
3. God required him to give up his self-will, and consent to be guided and governed as He shall see fit. But
4. This he refused to do, and determines rather to have *his own way*, and in so doing rebels against Divine authority, and goes off in the line of sinful self-indulgence; and thus the *occasion* of sin is seen to be **THE LOVE OF CONSCIOUS FREEDOM.**

*An abridgement.