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ART. I.—THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN.

*Die christliche Lehre von der Sünde, dargestellt von Julius Müller.
Breslau, 1844.*

WE have placed the title of this work of Müller at the head of our article, not for the purpose of entering into an analysis and criticism of it at this time, but rather, as a strong and convenient shelter under which to labor upon the much vexed and much vexing doctrine of Original Sin. We are the more inclined to connect our reflections upon this subject with this work, in even this slight and external manner, (1.) because they coincide substantially with what we suppose to be the general theory presented in this thorough and thoroughly elaborated treatise, though differing from it, as may be seen, on the point of the nature of the connection of the individual with Adam, and by such other modifications as would naturally result from considering the subject from other points of view, and with reference to questions current among a theological public, differing very considerably from that in the midst of which this work originated; and, (2.) because it gives us countenance in the attempt to investigate the doctrine from a metaphysical, and not merely psychological, position. For it is the misfortune of the theology in vogue for the last hundred years, as it seems to us, that sin has been contemplated in its phenomenal aspects, rather than in its hidden sources. The majority of treatises that have been written upon this subject since the middle of the eighteenth century, have been occupied principally with *conscious*, and (technically so called) *actual* transgression; while sin, in the form of a nature, deeper than consciousness, and the very fountain of all consciousness itself, on this subject, has too generally been neglected. While, therefore, the psychology of sin has been diligently in-

vestigated, and with as much success as could have been expected under the circumstances, the metaphysical side of the doctrine has made little or no progress. If we turn to the treatises of an elder day—to the doctrinal statements on this subject of Augustine or Calvin, or Turretine, or Quenstedt, or the elder Edwards—we find the reverse to be the fact. Here the essence of sin is regarded as a nature or state of the soul, which manifests itself in a conscious and actual transgression that derives all its malignity and guilt from this, its deeper source. With this source itself—this metaphysical ground of the psychological or conscious transgression—the profound intellect and acute speculation of these men were chiefly occupied, knowing that if all the contradiction and all the mystery on this difficult doctrine, could be cleared up at this point, the question would be settled once for all. Instead, however, of advancing in the general line of advance, marked and deeply scored into all the best theology of the past, the theological mind for the last century has stopped short, as it seems to us, and has contented itself with investigating the mere superficies of the subject—ignoring, and in some instances denying, the existence of its solid substance. The effect of this species of theologizing is every way deleterious. In the first place, the problem itself can never be solved by this method, any more than the mystery of life can be cleared up by a mere examination of the leaves and blossoms of a tree. The scientific statement of the doctrine of original sin has made no advance since the statement made in 1643, by the Westminster Assembly. There has been much acute and intense speculation upon the doctrine since that time,—for mysterious as it is, and repulsive as it is, to fallen human nature, it will ever charm like the serpent's eye,—but we know of no distinct and strict wording of the doctrine made since then, that contains a fuller and clearer and less contradictory statement than that of the Catechism. It is plain, that there will be no "progress in Theology" by this route. In the second place, this neglect of the sinful nature, and this fastening of the eye upon the sinful exercises only, is greatly injurious to the interests of practical religion. The attention of man is directed to the mere surface of his character. His eye is not made to penetrate into what he *is*, because he is constantly occupied with what he *does*. The standard of character itself is lowered; while, as all church history shows, the grade of character actually reached is far lower than that attained on another theory and view of sin.

Finally, less unanimity among theologians is the natural result of this neglect of the metaphysical side of the doctrine

of sin. We know that it is one of the most popular of fallacies, that nothing is less settled than metaphysics,—that the brain of a thorough-bred metaphysician is as confused as his heart, according to Burke, is hard. Still, in the face of the fallacy, we re-affirm that nothing but a return to the old ground occupied by the combatants of an earlier day, will enable theologians to range themselves into two, and only two, divisions, instead of the present variety of “schools,” whose name is legion. The questions that arise, and the answers that are compelled, by a metaphysical method, as distinguished from a merely empirical one, *locate* the theologian, on one side or the other of the line; because, by this method, terms are used in their strict signification, and the conceptions denoted by them are distinct.

Suppose, for example, that the term “sinful,” when applied to the nature of fallen man, instead of being employed in the sense of “innocent,” as it sometimes is at the present day, had but the one uniform and constant signification of “guilty,”—would not all who hold and teach the doctrine of a sinful nature see eye to eye on that point? Suppose again, that the word “imputation” were employed to denote the charge of guilt upon the absolutely guilty; and never an arbitrary charge of any sort,—would not all who hold to the imputation of a sinful nature be at one on this point? And yet the loose use of these and kindred terms, and the multiplication of schools in theology thereby, can be prevented only by that method of investigation which passes by all manifestations and phenomena, and having reached the nature itself, asks—is it innocent, or is it culpable?—is this nature as justly and properly imputable, and so, as worthy of punishment, in the case of the individual, as of Adam, or is it not? Here the subject lies in a nut-shell; and while the “yea, yea,” locates the theologian on one side of the line first sharply drawn in the days of Augustine, and the “nay, nay,” locates him on the other side, what is still better, this strict handling of terms leads to a deeper and more satisfactory enucleation and establishment of the truth itself.

For, if a man affirm that the fallen nature is sin itself, and not the mere occasion of sin—is guilt itself, and not the mere occasion of guilt; and also, that all this is as true of the posterity of Adam as of the individual Adam himself, he is not only bound to explain this on rational grounds, but he is driven to the attempt to explain it by the inevitable movement of his own mind. And this was the case with the men whom we have mentioned. They never shrank from affirming that the ultimate form of sin is a nature, that this nature is guilt,

and that the wrath of God justly rests upon every individual of the human race because of it. And when pressed with the difficulties that beset this, and every other one of the "deep things of God," by as acute and able opponents as the world has ever seen, instead of relaxing the statement, or betaking themselves to a loose and equivocal use of words, they stuck to terms, and endeavored to think through, and establish, on philosophical grounds, a form of doctrine which they first and heartily adopted, on experimental and Scriptural grounds. We do not say that they completely solved the problem, but we verily believe that they were in the way of its solution, and that theological speculation must join on where they left off, and move forward in their line of advance. No one age, however wise and learned, can furnish a finished Theology for all the ages to come; but if we would have substantial advance, each and every age must be in communication with the wisdom and truth of the preceding, and form a piece of continuity with it.

Returning to this point of unanimity, consider for a moment the variety of opinions among us in regard to this subject of a sinful nature. What divisions and controversies exist among those who all alike profess to be Calvinists! How little unanimity exists on this doctrine among those who all alike repel the charge of Arminianism! One portion or school teach, that there is a corrupt nature in man, but deny that it is really and strictly sinful. Another portion or school teach, that there is a nature in man to which the epithet "sinful" is properly applied, who yet, when pressed with the inquiry—is it *crime*, and deserving of the wrath of God?—shrink from the right answer, and return an uncertain sound, of which the substance is, that its contrariety to law, and not its voluntariness, is the essence of sin. Again, there are those who are prepared to fall back upon the ground of the elder Calvinists, up to a certain point, but who resolve the whole matter when pressed by their opponents, into the will and sovereignty of God, and deprecate all attempts to construct the doctrine on grounds of reason and philosophy. And finally, there are some who are inclined not only to the doctrinal statement of Augustine and Owen and the elder Edwards, but also to their method of establishing and defending it, by means of the doctrine of the real oneness of Adam and his posterity, in the fall of the human soul. And yet Calvinism is one in its nature and theory. Using this term to denote not merely that particular scheme of Christian doctrine drawn up by Calvin, but that doctrinal system which had its origin in the controversy of Augustine with Pelagius, and which received a further development through

the reformed theologians on the continent, and the puritan divines of England; we may say that Calvinism teaches but one thing in regard to the existence of a sinful nature in fallen man, and but one thing in regard to the meaning of the term sinful. During those ages of controversy—the 16th and 17th centuries—those who held the doctrine of a sinful nature, and of a sinful nature that is guilt, stood upon one side, and stood all together; and those who rejected this doctrine stood upon the other side, and also stood all together. The Christian church was divided into two divisions, and no more. And this, because the controversy was a thorough one, owing to the profound view of sin taken by the disputants on the Augustinian side; the metaphysical, rather than the merely psychological aspect of the doctrine being uppermost.

It is therefore in this connection that we rejoice at the appearance, in this age, of a work like that of Müller, which recognizes a deeper source and form of sin than particular and conscious choices, and invites the theologian to contemplate the origin and essential character of that *nature* and *state* of the human soul, from which all conscious transgression proceeds. Whether it adopt all the views of the author or not, we are confident the reflecting mind that has made itself acquainted with the history of the doctrine of original sin, will find no difficulty in deciding on which side of the great controversy this treatise is; and furthermore, that it is on the whole a substantial advance towards a complete philosophical statement of the theological statement contained germinally in the works of Augustine, and formally in all the best symbols of the church.

In commencing the investigation of the doctrine of original sin, we naturally start from one distinct and unambiguous statement of Scripture; and we know of no one at once so plain and full as the affirmation of St. Paul, that man is by nature a child of wrath. The doctrine of a guilty nature in man is taught either by implication, or by an explicit detail, in other passages in Paul's Epistles, in the Psalms of David, in the Epistles of John, and in the Prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, and in the teachings of Christ; but perhaps no single text of Scripture enounces the doctrine so briefly and comprehensively as this. It makes specific mention of the two principal characteristics of human sinfulness. (1.) Its depth; and by implication, its universality; and, (2.) Its guilt. After all that may be said upon this boundless subject, in its various relations to man, to the universe, and to God, the whole substance of the doctrine may be crowded into a very narrow compass. When we have said, that man is *by nature a child*

of wrath—when we have said, that sin is a nature, and that this nature is guilt—we have said in substance all that can be said. The most exhaustive investigation of the subject will not reveal any feature or element that is not contained by implication in this brief statement.

The true method of investigating the doctrine is thus prescribed by the terms in which it is stated in Scripture, and we shall endeavor to follow it rigidly. We shall endeavor to exhibit the Scriptural doctrine of original sin, not by merely reciting a series of texts, and there leaving the matter, but by seizing upon the most significant and pregnant text of all, and rigorously developing it. If we are not mistaken, the simple contents of this one proposition of St. Paul, will unfold themselves by close reflection into a detailed view, and a doctrinal statement that will be found to harmonize also with reason and the Christian experience.

I. This passage of inspiration teaches, that sin is a *nature*. "We were *φύσει*—by nature—children of wrath." The Greek word *φύσις*, like the Latin, *natura*, always denotes something original and innate, in contradistinction to something acquired by practice or habit. Whenever we wish to represent an attribute or quality, as residing in a subject in the most deep and total manner possible, we say that it is in it by nature, or as a nature; and when in our investigations we are brought back to a nature, as a fundamental basis, we think we have reached the bottom.

When we search for the essence of human sinfulness, we find it in the form of a nature in the man. Suppose we arrest the sinner in the outward act, and fix our attention upon sin in this form, we are immediately compelled, by the operation of our own mind, to let go of this outward act, and to seek for the reality of his sin within him. The outward act, we see in an instant, is but an effect of a cause; and we instinctively turn our eye inward, and fasten it upon the cause. The outward act of transgression drives us, by the very laws of thought, to the power that produced it—to the particular volition that originated it. No mind that thinks at all upon sin can possibly stop with the outward act. Its own rational reflection hurries it away, almost instantaneously, from the blow of the murderer—from the momentary gleam of the knife—to the volition within that strung the muscle, and nerved the blow.

But the mind cannot stop here in its search for the essential reality of sin. When we have reached the sphere—the *inward* sphere—of volitions, we have by no means reached the ultimate ground and form of sin. We may suppose, that because we have gone beyond the outward act—because we are now

within the man—we have found sin in its last form. But we are mistaken. Closer thinking, and what is still better, a deeper experience, will disclose to us a depth in our souls, lower than that in which volitions occur, and a form of sin in that depth, and to the bottom of it, very different from the sin of single volitions.

The thinking mind, which cannot stop with mere effects, but seeks for first causes, and especially the heart that knows its own plague, cannot stop with that quite superficial action of the will which manifests itself in a volition. This action is too isolated—too intermittent—and, in reality, too feeble, to account for so steady and uniform a state of character as human sinfulness. For these particular volitions, ending in particular outward actions, the mind instinctively seeks a common ground. For these innumerable volitions, occurring each by itself and separately, the mind instinctively seeks *one single indivisible nature* from which they spring. When the mind has got back to this point, it stops content, because it has reached a central point. When it has traced all these outward acts and inward volitions to one common principle and source, it stops content, because it has introduced unity into the subject of its investigation. When the human mind has attained a view that is both central and simple, it is satisfied.

It is not more certain, that we are compelled by the laws of our minds to refer properties to a substance, than that, by the operation of the same laws, we are compelled to refer sinful volitions to a simple nature. When we see exercises of the soul, we as instinctively refer them to a nature in that soul, as we refer the properties of a body to the substance of that body. In both cases the human mind is seeking for unity and simplicity in its perceptions. It cannot be content with merely looking at these various properties of matter, this impenetrability, this extension in space, this form, this color, and stopping here. It wants unity of perception, and simplicity of perception, and therefore it goes farther, and *refers* all these properties to one simple substance, of which they are the manifestation. In like manner, the human mind cannot be content with merely looking at all these exercises—these unnumbered volitions of the soul. It craves unity and simplicity of perception here too, and *refers* these innumerable, sinful volitions, to a *nature* in man, one and indivisible, of which they are the manifestations.

Again: the argument from the Christian experience is as strong as that from the nature of the human mind, in favor of the position that the ultimate form—the essential reality—of sin, is a nature. Although in the first period of conviction of

sin, the attention of the man may be directed mainly to actions and volitions; and although this may be the case to a considerable extent, even in the first stages of the Christian experience, it is yet safe to say, that the Christian man is troubled through the Christian life on earth, mainly, and permanently, by his sinful *nature*. The reality of sin, for every man whose experience is worth being taken as testimony, is not in particular volitions of his will, but in its abiding state—not in what he chooses to do now and then, but in that unceasing, uninterrupted determination of self to evil. This is the torment of his life—that below his volitions to sin—below his resolutions to reform—even below his deepest self-examination, and his most distinct self-knowledge—below all the conscious exercises and operations of his soul, there is a sinful *nature*, a dark ground of moral evil.

We are aware of the mysteriousness which is thrown over the subject of sin, by the assumption of a form of sin which is deeper than consciousness. But we must take things as we find them, whether they are mysterious or not; whether we can explain them or not. The contents which we are to analyze are given to our hand, and whether we succeed or not in the analysis, they have the same fixed and real nature of their own. And, we may add, the true way to arrive at the unfolding of a mystery, is to recognize in the outset, the existence of all that belongs to it. The true way to arrive at the successful solution of a dark problem, is to retain all the terms of its statement. To throw out one or more of the terms which properly belong to the problem, and in which its real nature is contained, because it seems to be a troublesome term to manage, is to utterly prevent its solution; and the attempt to unfold the deep mystery of original sin, while rejecting in the outset an element that is essential—the sin that is deeper than consciousness, or the sinful nature, as distinguished from sinful volitions—simply because it darkens a subject that is confessedly mysterious, must inevitably be a failure.

Without troubling ourselves, therefore, at this point in the investigation, about the mysteriousness of a sin of which we are not conscious, because it is the basis and explanation of consciousness, and therefore of necessity below its range and plane, let us here now settle the fact, whether there is any such sin.

(1.) And, in the first place, is it not a fact, that in regard to the matter of sin, we do refer all the conscious processes of our souls to something back of these processes? The materials that make up our consciousness as sinners—the innumerable items of which it is composed—the thousands of wrong volitions,

and the hundreds of thousands of wrong emotions, and the millions of wrong thoughts—do we not, as a matter of fact, refer them all to some *one* thing, out of which they spring? Can we, and as matter of fact, do we, continue to chase these innumerable and constantly vanishing particulars, dropping one as soon as we have reached the next succeeding, because the mind can grasp but one thing at a time, and thus lose the mind in an endless series, instead of collecting it in one act of contemplation and reflection; or do we, with David, cease this attempt to number our iniquities, and having acknowledged that they are more than the hairs of our head, (Ps. xl. 12,) with him confess a *one* sin of heart and of nature at the bottom of them all? No man who has had any experience on this subject at all, will deny that such is the fact. Whatever his theory may be, every man does, in his private reflections and secret confession to God, find a form of sin within him which he regards as the fountain and cause of all his particular and conscious transgressions. He finds an original sin from which these particular wrong thoughts, emotions, and volitions, proceed.

(2.) And now, in the second place, is it not a fact, that we are never conscious of this source itself of transgressions, but only of what flows from it? We are undeniably conscious of these thoughts, these emotions, these volitions—of these items which go to make up the sum of our experience—of these various materials of consciousness. But, are we, as matter of fact, ever conscious of that *principle* of evil—that sinful *nature*, to which, as we have seen, we instinctively refer all our conscious transgressions? We have only to reflect a moment to see that we are never conscious of this sinful *nature* itself, but only of what proceeds from it. The evil *principle* to which we refer all these manifestations of evil, remains ever below the plane of consciousness. These manifestations may, themselves, become more and more profound, and may carry us down into deeper and deeper regions, but we find the sinful nature ever below us; as we go down into the depths of our apostate souls, and know still more and still more, of the plague of our hearts, we are all along, and at every lower point, obliged to assume the existence of a yet deeper sin than our consciousness has grasped. We never reach the bottom; we never come, in consciousness, to the lowest and ultimate form of sin; or, which is the same thing, we never see the time when we have become conscious of all our sinfulness, and there are no further discoveries for us to make. The prayer of David is the proper prayer for us to the day of our death: "Search me, O Lord, and try me, and see what evil ways are within me."

"Cleanse Thou me from *secret* faults." A prayer, it may be remarked, that is utterly unintelligible on the hypothesis that there is no sin deeper than consciousness.

This sinful nature, as distinguished from the conscious transgressions that proceed from it, is not a part of our experience, but something which we *infer* from our experience, as the origin and explanation of it. It is the metaphysical ground of the physical—*i. e.*, psychological—phenomena. We find within consciousness, an innumerable amount of particulars—an endless series of wrong thoughts, emotions, and volitions—each occurring by itself; and this is all we do or can find in consciousness. And if we were confined merely to what we are conscious of—if we were shut up to the series of our experiences merely—we should never come to the knowledge of a sinful nature. But when in reflection, and for the purposes of science, we arrest all these processes of consciousness—when we bring this ever-flowing stream of conscious transgressions to a stand-still—that we may look at them, and find the origin and first cause of them, then we are obliged to *assume* a principle below them all—to *infer* a nature back of them all. Thus, this sinful nature is an *inference*, an *assumption*, or, to use a word borrowed from geometry, a *postulate*, which the mind is obliged to grant, in order to find a key that will unlock, and explain its own experience.

"But granting," the objector may say, "granting that, as matter of fact, we do infer and assume, from what we find in our consciousness, the existence of a nature deeper than consciousness, to which we refer the data of experience, and by which we explain them, what evidence is there, that there is in reality any such thing? By your own confession, it is entirely beyond the sphere of human consciousness; and though it may be a convenient a priori postulate, under which to group and generalize the various particulars in our experience, what evidence is there, that there is an actual correspondent to it in the human soul?" We answer: The evidence in this case is precisely the same with that which exists in the case of any and every purely metaphysical truth. The evidence cannot of course be derived from consciousness, because we are seeking the ground and explanation of consciousness itself; and therefore must be sought for in that *normal and necessary movement of our rational intellect*, by which we are compelled to the a priori assumption. We find ourselves *necessitated*, in every instance that we attempt to find an adequate origin for our particular transgressions, to assume the existence of a sinful nature, and this *rational necessity* in the case, is the evidence that we need. When we find that the mind is driven by the *very*

laws of thought to an a priori assumption, and that it is *invariably* driven to it whenever it reflects at all upon its experience, we have all the evidence that can be had for a metaphysical truth—all the evidence that can rationally be required, that the assumption corresponds to the truth and reality in the case. Reason cannot impose upon itself, and invariably teach a truth of knowing, that is no truth of being—a truth of logic and science, that is no truth of fact; and therefore it is, that men will always believe that there is a substance in which accidents inhere, and a nature from which manifestations proceed, though there is no evidence from consciousness for either. The fact, that the human mind, in the exercise of its sober reflection upon the data of consciousness, is *invariably* and *unavoidably* compelled to a given assumption, is evidence that the assumption has rational grounds, and corresponds to truth and reality. If it is not, then a lie has been built into the very structure of the human mind, and it is not to be trusted in regard to any a priori truth. If, when following the laws of thought, and trusting to the constitution imposed upon it by the Creator, there is no certainty that the assumptions which it is compelled to make as the sufficient ground and adequate explanation of its experimental consciousness, correspond to the truth of things, the human mind might as well stop thinking altogether.

And what shall we do in this connection with the sense of guilt? This sinful nature, as matter of fact, is the source of remorse, and the cause of the most poignant self-reproach in those whose senses have been exercised to discern good and evil. Can we suppose that there is a lie here too, and that pangs come into the human soul, and exist there, with no valid reason for them—no real ground for them to rest upon? Can we suppose that all the remorse and self-reproach that has resulted in the souls of men, from a knowledge of their *nature* and *character*, and not merely of their particular acts, was uncalled for, because there is in reality no such nature? Can we suppose that He who looks on things precisely as they are, *knows* that there is no just cause for this mental distress in His creatures?

In addition to these arguments derived from the nature of the human mind, and the sense of guilt, (which latter point opens a wide and most interesting field of investigation,) we may add, that the history of Christian doctrine shows that the church has in all ages believed in a sinful nature, as distinguished from conscious transgressions. The soundest, and, as we believe, the profoundest symbols, all teach the existence of a form of human sinfulness, running deeper than even the most

thorough and searching Christian experience—or, which is the same thing—that the Divine Eye beholds a corruption in man, more radical and more profound than has ever been seen by the eye of man himself.

II. Assuming, then, that the fact of a sinful nature has been established, we pass to the second statement of St. Paul, that man is by nature *a child of wrath*. We pass from his statement, that sin, in its ultimate form, is a nature,—to his statement, that this nature is *guilt*. And we need not say, that in so doing, we are passing over into the darkest and most dangerous district in the whole domain of theological speculation. The recondite nature of the subject, the difficulty of clearly expressing one's conceptions, even when they lie distinct in one's own mind, the liability to push a point too far, the failure to guard one's statements with sufficient care, and many other causes that might be specified, conspire to render this side of the doctrine of original sin one of the most difficult of all topics of discussion. And before we venture out into this region, we wish to say beforehand, that we should regret and dread above all things, to advance any views on this important doctrine that would conflict with the Christian's experience of the plague of his heart—any views that would be in the least degree prejudicial to that profound view of sin which the soul does actually have when under the teaching and influence of the Holy Spirit. We most heartily and religiously acknowledge, that here the Practical must have preference to the Speculative; and we would immediately give up any speculative view or theory of sin that we might have formed, the moment that we saw that it would go, or tend in the least, to disparage a thorough-going statement of the doctrine in a creed, or to promote an imperfect and shallow experience of it in the heart.

The apostle teaches, that sinful man is a child of wrath. Now, none but a *guilty* being can be the object of the righteous and holy displeasure of God. The doctrine of the Divine Anger is tenable only on the supposition that the objects upon whom it expends itself are *really ill deserving*—are *really criminal*. It becomes necessary therefore to show, that that sinful nature of man, on account of which he becomes a child of wrath, and obnoxious to the Divine anger, is a *guilty* nature. In doing this, we shall be led to discuss sin in its relation to the human Will, and to Adam, the first man.

(1.) In regard to the first point, the position taken is, that this sinful nature is in the Will, and is the product of the Will. We say that it is in the Will, in contradistinction to the physical nature of man. One statement of the doctrine of original

sin makes it to consist in the depravation of man's sensuous nature merely. In this case, the Will is conceived to be extraneous to this corrupted nature, and merely the executor of it. Original sin, in this case, is not in the voluntary part of man, but in the involuntary part of him; and guilt cleaves to him when the voluntary part executes the promptings of the involuntary part; and guilt does not cleave to him until this does take place. The adherents of this view insist, (and properly too, if this statement is correct,) that the term "sinful," in the sense of guilty or criminal, cannot be applied to this depraved physical nature—to this (so-called) original sin.

In opposition to this view, we affirm that original sin does not consist in the depravation of man's sensuous or physical nature, but in the depravation of his Will itself. The corruption of the physical nature of man is one of the consequences of original sin, but not original sin itself. This is a depravation of a far deeper and more central faculty than that of sense—a corruption of the voluntary power itself. It is because the human Will—the *governing* power in the soul—first fell away from God, that the other faculties of man are in the condition they are—that the affections are carnal—that the understanding is darkened—that the physical nature is depraved; and these effects of apostacy should never be put in the place of their cause—of that corruption of the Will which is the origin of them all.

But the examination of a single instance of the gratification of a sensuous propensity, is enough to show that sin lies elsewhere than in the physical nature. A man, we will suppose, gratifies the sensuous craving for strong drink. The sin in the case does not lie in this craving of the sensuous nature, corrupted though it be. The sin in the case lies further back, in the Will; and, be it observed, not in that particular volition of the Will, by which the act of drinking was performed, but in that *abiding state* of the Will—that selfishness, or *selfish nature* in the Will—which prompted and permitted the volition. Here, as in every instance, we are led back to a sinful nature, as the essence of sin; and this nature we find in the Will itself; we find it to be a particular state of the Will itself.

But, besides saying that this sinful nature is in the Will, we have said furthermore, that it is the product of the Will. By this we mean, that the efficient producing author of this sinful nature is the Will itself; in other words, that this nature is a self-willed, a self-determined nature. Before proceeding further with this part of the subject, we wish to premise a few remarks upon these terms, "self-willed" and "self-determined."

It is unfortunate for the cause of truth, and especially for the scientific development of the doctrine of original sin, that the term self-determination has been appropriated by the Arminian School in Theology; and still more unfortunate, that the conception denoted by it has been, and still is, such a defective and inadequate one. Both Arminians and their opponents have understood, and still do understand, by this term, an ability in the Will, at any moment, to choose or refuse some particular thing. The Will accordingly, both for Arminians and their opponents, is merely the faculty of single choices—the faculty of particular volitions; and self-determination for both parties denotes the ability to put forth a single volition, or not, at pleasure. The Will for both parties is simply that faculty of particular choices, by which we raise a hand or let it drop—a species of voluntary power, which the horse employs, in common with man, when he chooses clover and refuses burdock.

This is the notion attached to the term self-determination in the treatise of Edwards—the ability, viz., of the Will to resolve this way or that, at any moment, and under all circumstances; and if this is the only self-determination of which we can have any conception, then Edwards was correct in denying the doctrine. So far as his work combats this defective and inadequate notion of self-determination—so far as it seeks to overthrow the Arminian self-determination—it is one of great value. From such a superficial view of the Will, as being merely the faculty of single isolated volitions, and from such an inadequate notion of self-determination, as being merely the ability to choose or refuse a particular thing, in a particular case, nothing but the most shallow view, both of sin and of regeneration, could result. The great merit of Edwards, it seems to us, consists in his powerful and successful resistance of a false theology, rather than in his own positive statements, concerning the nature and functions of the human Will.

In saying, therefore, that the sinful nature of man is the product of his Will, we do not mean to teach, that it has its origin in the Will, considered as the faculty of choices, or particular volitions. We no more believe that original sin was produced by a volition, than that it can be destroyed by one. And if we can have no idea of the Will except as such a faculty of single choices, and no idea of voluntary action except such as we are conscious of, in our volitions and resolutions, then we grant that the sinful nature must be referred to some other producing cause than the human Will, and

that the epithets, "self-determined," and "self-originated," cannot be applied to it.

But it seems to us that we can have a fuller and more adequate idea of the voluntary power in man than this comes to. It seems to us that our idea of the human Will is by no means exhausted of its contents, when we have taken into view merely that ability which a man has, to regulate his conduct in a particular instance. It seems to us that we do believe in the existence of a controlling power in the soul, that is far more central and profound than the quite superficial faculty by which we regulate the movement of our limbs outwardly, or inwardly summon up our energies to the performance of particular acts. It seems to us, that by the Will, is meant a voluntary power that lies at the very centre of the soul, and whose movements consist, not so much in choosing or refusing, in reference to particular circumstances, as *in determining the whole man with reference to some great and ultimate end of living*. The characteristic of the Will proper, as distinguished from the volitionary faculty, is *determination of the whole being to an ultimate end*, rather than selection of means for attaining that end in a particular case.* The difference between the voluntary and the volitionary power—between the Will proper and the faculty of choices—may be seen by considering a particular instance of the exercise of the latter. Suppose that a man chooses to indulge one of his appetites in a particular instance—the appetite for alcoholic stimulus, *e.g.*—and that he actually does gratify it. In this instance, he puts forth one single volition, and performs one particular act. By an act of the faculty of choices, of which he is distinctly conscious, and over which he has arbitrary power, he drinks, and gratifies his appetite. But why does he thus choose in this particular instance? In other words, is there not a deeper ground for this single volition? Is not this particular act of the choice determined by a far deeper and pre-existing *determination of his whole inward being to self, as an ultimate end of living*? And now, if the Will should be widened out and deepened, so as to contain this whole inward state of the man—this entire *tendency* of the soul to self, and sin—is it not plain that it would be a very different power from that which put forth the particular volition? Would not the Will, as thus conceived, cover a far wider surface of the soul, and reach down to a far deeper depth in it, than that faculty of single choices which covers but a single

* This distinction between the Will proper, and the faculty of choices, is marked in Latin by the two words, *Voluntas* and *Arbitrium*; and in that one of the modern tongues, whose vocabulary for Philosophy is the richest of all, by the two words, *Wille* and *Willkühr*.

point on the surface, and never goes below the surface?—Would not a faculty, comprehensive enough to include the *whole* man, and sufficiently deep and central to be the origin and basis of a *nature*, a *character*, a *permanent, moral state*, be a very different faculty from that volitionary power whose activity is merely on the surface, and whose products are single resolutions, and transient volitions?

Now, by the Will, we mean such a faculty. We mean by it a voluntary power that lies at the very foundation of the human soul, constituting its central, active principle, containing the whole moral state, and all the moral affections. We mean by it a voluntary power that carries the *whole* inward being along with it when it moves—a power, in short, which is the man himself—the *person*.

It will be seen from this view, that the voluntary power in man is the deepest and most central power within him. We sometimes hear the human soul spoken of as composed fundamentally of Intellect and of Feeling, and only superficially of Will; as if man were an Intellect at bottom, or a Heart at bottom, and then a Will were superinduced as the executive of these. But this cannot be so, for man is a person, and the bottom of personality is free Will. Man at bottom is a Will—a self-determining creature—and his other faculties of knowing and feeling are grafted into this stock and root; and hence he is responsible from centre to circumference.*

The Will, as thus defined, we affirm to be the responsible and guilty author of the sinful nature. Indeed, this sinful nature is nothing more nor less than the state of the Will; nothing more nor less than its constant and total determination to self, as the ultimate end of living. This voluntary power lying at the bottom of the soul, as its elementary base, and carrying all the faculties and powers of the man along with it, whenever it

* Since writing the above, we have fallen in with the following corroborations: "*Voluntas est quippe in omnibus: imo omnes nihil aliud quam voluntates sunt. Nam quid est cupiditas, et lætitia, nisi voluntas in eorum consensio-nem quæ volumus? Et quid est metus atque tristitia, nisi voluntas in dissen-sionem ab his quæ volumus.*" Aug. De civitate Dei, lib. xiv., cap. vi. "The Will is in the soul like the *primum mobile* in the heavens, that doth carry all the inferior orbs away with its own motion. This is the *whole* of a man; a man is not what he knoweth, or what he remembereth, but what he *Willeth*. The Will is the Queen sitting upon its throne, exercising its dominion over the other parts of the soul. The Will is the proper seat of all our sin; and if there could be a *summum malum* as there is a *summum bonum*, this would be in the Will."—Burgess' Original Sin, Part III. chap. xiv. sec. 1.

"In the Will, we are to conceive suitable and proportionate affections to those we call passions in the sensitive part. Thus, in the Will, (as it is a rational appetite,) there are love, joy, desire, fear, and hatred. * * * So that the Will loveth, the Will rejoiceth, and the Will desireth," &c.—Burgess. Part III. chap. iv. sec. 11.

moves, and wherever it goes, has turned away from God as an ultimate end, and has directed itself to self, as an ultimate end; and this self-direction—this permanent and entire determination of itself—this *state* of the Will—is the sinful nature of man.

Here then we have a depraved nature, and a depraved nature that is guilt, because it is a self-originated nature.* Here, then, is the child of wrath. Were this nature created and put into man, as an intellectual nature, or as a particular temperament, is put into him, by the Creator of all things, it would not be a responsible and guilty nature, nor would man be a child of wrath. But it does not thus originate. It has its origin in the free and responsible use of that voluntary power which God has created and placed in the human soul, as its most central, most mysterious, and most hazardous endowment. It is a self-determined nature—*i. e.*, a nature originated in a Will, and by a Will.

It will be apparent, from what has been said, that we regard the Arminian idea of the Will, and of self-determination, to be altogether inadequate to the purpose intended by it. The motive of this school, we are charitable enough to believe, was a good one. It desired to vindicate the ways of God to man—to make man responsible for his character—but it ended in the annihilation of all sin except that of volitions; of all sin except what is technically called *actual* sin, because its view of the Will was not profound enough. And as we wish to bring out into as clear a light as possible the difference between the Arminian self-determination, and what we suppose to be the true doctrine, let us for a moment exhibit the relation of both theories to “the doctrine of inability,” as it is familiarly styled.

According to the Arminian school, the Will is merely the faculty of choices; and its action consists solely in volitions. Self-determination, consequently, is the ability to put forth a volition. Now, as a volition is confessedly under the arbitrary control of a man, it follows, that he has the ability to put forth (so-called) holy or sinful volitions at pleasure; and inasmuch as no deeper action of the Will than this volitionary action is recognized in the scheme, it follows, that he has the ability to be holy or sinful, at pleasure. This is the “power to the contrary,” which even sinful man has, although the more thoughtful portion of the school freely acknowledge that it is never exercised, as matter of fact, except under the co-

* To use a scholastic distinction—it is *Peccatum originans*, and not merely *originatum*.

operating influence of the Holy Spirit. This view of the Will, and of self-determination, then, teaches theoretically, at all events, the doctrine of man's ability to regenerate himself. There is no other action of the Will than that of single volitions, and over these man has arbitrary power.

But the true idea of the Will, and of self-determination, while, bringing man in guilty for his sinful nature and conduct, forbids the attribution to him of a self-regenerating power. According to the Arminian theory, all the action of the Will consists of volitions, and one volition being as much within the power of the man as another, a succeeding volition can at any moment reverse and undo the preceding. But, according to what we suppose to be the true view of the Will, there is an action of this voluntary power far deeper, and consequently far less easily managed than that of single choices. We have spoken of a deep and central action of the Will, which consists in the determination and tendency of the *whole* soul, and of the soul as a *whole*. We have spoken of a movement in the voluntary power that carries the whole inward being along with it. Now, it is plain, that such a power as this—including so much, and running so deep—cannot, from the very nature of the case, be such a facile and easily managed power, as that by which we resolve to do some particular thing in every-day life. While, therefore, we affirm that the Will, using the term in the comprehensive sense in which we have defined it, is a free and self-determined power, we deny, that having once taken its direction, it can reverse its motion by a volition or resolution. If the Will were merely the faculty of choices or volitions, this might be the case; but that deep under current, that central self-determination, that great main tendency of the Will to self and sin, as an ultimate end, though having a free and criminal origin, is not to be reversed so easily. We have only to take the Will as thus conceived, and steadily eye it in this free process of self-determination, to see that there is no power in itself, from the very nature of the case, by which the direction of its movement can be altered. Take and hold the sinful Will of man, in this steady, this inmost, this total determination of itself to self, as the ultimate end of its existence, and say how the power that is to reverse all this process can possibly come out of the Will, *thus shut up, and entirely swallowed in the process*. How is the process to destroy itself, and turn into its own contrary? How is Satan to cast out Satan? Having once set itself, with all its energy, in a given direction, and towards a *final* end, the human Will becomes a current that is unmanageable—a power too strong for itself to turn back—not because of any compulsion or stress from without, be it observed, but simply because of its own momentum—simply

because of the obstinate energy with which it is perversely going in the contrary direction. For the *whole* Will is determined, if determined at all; consequently, when a tendency or determination, as distinguished from a volition, has been taken, there is no remainder of power in reserve, (as it were behind the existing determination or tendency,) by which the present moral state of the Will can be reversed. For this determination or permanent state of the Will, as we have observed again and again, is something very different from a volition, which does not carry the whole soul along with it, and which may be reversed by another volition back of it. When a determination has occurred, and a nature has been originated, the Will proper—the *whole* voluntary power—is *in for it*; and hence, in the case of sin, the bondage in the very seat of freedom—the absolute inability to be holy, springing out of, and identical with the determination to be evil—which is a self-determination.

It will be seen, that according to this theory, the freedom of the Will does not consist in the ability to originate a holy or sinful nature at any instant, and according to the caprice of the individual. It does not consist in the ability to determine itself to good or evil, as an ultimate end of existence, with the same facility and agility with which single choices can be exercised. It does not consist in an ability to jerk over from one moral *state* of the will, into a contrary moral *state*, at any moment, by a violent or a resolute effort. The doctrine of the freedom of the Will does indeed require us to affirm that the Will is primarily and constantly self-moved—that its permanent tendency and character is not imposed upon it as the tendency of the brute is imposed upon it by the creative act; but the doctrine does not require us to affirm, that when the Will has once freely formed its character, and responsibly originated its nature, it can then, *ad libitum*, or by any power then possessed by it, form a contrary character, and originate an entirely contrary nature within itself. All that is to be claimed is, that at the initial point in the history of the human Will, a free and responsible start shall be taken, a self-determination shall begin and continue. It is not to be affirmed, for it contradicts the experience of every man who has had any valuable experience upon this subject, that there is power in the will to cross and re-cross from a sinful to a holy *state*, at any moment—that the Will is in such an *indifferent* state in regard to the two great ultimate ends of action—God and self—that it stands affected in precisely the same way towards both, and by a volition, can choose either at pleasure.

(2.) The foregoing statement, it is hoped, will be sufficient to exhibit, so far as the limits of an article will allow, what is conceived to be the true idea of the Will, and of self-determination, in distinction from the Arminian view of them. We turn now to the relation of original sin to Adam, the head and representative of the race of mankind. There is not space to examine the passages of Scripture which speak of the connection of the individual with Adam. We shall assume, that such a connection is plainly taught in Scripture, particularly in the 5th chapter of Romans; and at the same time, barely call attention to the fact, that the soundest creeds of the Church, and that of the Westminster Assembly in particular, have all recognized the connection. Our object is to see if the views that have been presented will not throw some light upon one of the darkest points in speculative theology.

It will be recollected, that in the first part of this article, it was shown that the deepest and ultimate form of sin is below the sphere of consciousness—that we are not conscious of the sinful nature, but only of what proceeds from it. It will also be remembered, that this original sin, or sinful nature, has been traced to the Will as its originating cause, and thereby found to be a guilty nature. If, now, these two points have been made out, it follows as a corollary, that there is an action of the human Will deeper than the ordinary consciousness of man reaches. If man is not conscious of his sinful nature, and if, nevertheless, that nature is the product of his Will—is the very state of the Will itself—it follows, that his Will can put forth an action of which he is not conscious. And if this be so, it furthermore follows, that distinct consciousness is not an indispensable condition to the origin and existence of sin and guilt in the human soul.

We are as well aware as any body, that a statement like this seems to carry on the very face of it, not a mystery merely, but an absurdity. At first sight, it seems to be self-contradictory to affirm, that the responsible action of a free moral agent can go on in utter unconsciousness of the action—that the human Will can put forth its most important action, (action the most criminal, and the most tremendous in its consequences,) in a sphere too deep for the agent to know what he is doing. On the contrary, it seems to be as plain as an axiom, that knowledge must in every instance precede action—that the Will cannot act without first distinctly knowing what it is going to do. And accordingly, this is the position laid down in the beginning of all the current treatises on the Will.

Now, without entering into any process of ratiocination to support a mere theory, we wish to raise a simple question of

fact. Is it, then, a fact, that man is conscious of all the action of his Will? Is it a fact, that from the commencement of his existence, on and down through every moment of his existence, he is unintermittently *conscious* of what he is all the while doing, as a moral agent? Is it a fact, that the impenitent sinner—the *thoughtless* sinner, as we so often call him in our sermons—is *aware* every moment of what he is about? No man will pretend that such is the fact. Saying nothing in regard to that deeper action of the Will, which we have denominated its determination, no one will say that a man is distinctly conscious of all his volitions even, of each and every one of the millions of choices which he is exercising from the cradle to the grave. Even here, so near the surface of the soul, and with reference to its most palpable exercises, no one will be bold enough to affirm a distinct consciousness in every instance. Volition after volition, choice after choice, is exercised by the *unawakened, unanxious* sinner, with all the unconsciousness and mechanism, so to speak, with which the two thousand volitions by which he lifts his legs two thousand times in walking a single mile, are exercised.*

Take the first sinful man you meet, and say how much of his daily existence goes on within the sphere of self-consciousness. During how many moments of the day is this moral agent aware of what he is doing, as a moral agent? Of how many of the volitions which he puts forth in the attainment of his ends of living is he distinctly conscious? How many of his emotions are exercised in clear light of self-consciousness, so that he has a distinct knowledge and sense of their moral character? Is it not safe to say, that whole days, it may be whole weeks, and it may be whole months, pass in the lives of many men, during which there is not a single instant of distinct consciousness, in regard to the nature of the agencies going on within their souls? And will it do to say, that all this while there is no action of the Will?

The truth is, we cannot lay aside pre-conceived opinions, and look at the simple facts of the case, without being compelled to the position, that there not only can be, but there actually is, action of the Will that is not conscious action, and a vast amount of it. And this too, whether the Will be regarded as the volitionary or as the voluntary faculty. If we believe

* That the action in this instance is voluntary, in the sense that the muscles and limbs are moved ultimately by acts of the choice, is proved by the fact, that the man can *stop* walking. If it were strictly mechanical and involuntary, the walker must go on like a clock until his ambulatory apparatus ran down.

the Scripture doctrine, that man is evil *continually*, we must also believe, that the Will of man is in *continual* action—absorbed in an *uninterrupted* tendency and determination to self. The motion—the *κίνησις*—is incessant. But we know from observation, and as matter of fact, that man is not distinctly conscious of a thousandth part of this process, which is nevertheless steadily going on, whether he thinks of it or not, whether he is aware of it or not. If, now, while affirming, as we must, that there is no responsible action but action of the Will, we also affirm, as we must not, that there is no action of the Will but conscious action, we remove responsibility from the greater part of human life. Responsibility and criminality would, in this case, cleave only to that comparatively infinitesimal part of a man's life during which he sinned deliberately, and with the consciousness that he was sinning. Furthermore, it would follow, from this doctrine, that the more entire the man's absorption in evil—the more thoughtless and unconscious his life became in regard to sin—the less responsible he would be; the more depraved, the less guilty.

But in this instance again, as in a former, whatever may be our theory, we do practically acknowledge the truth of the doctrine of the responsible action of the human Will, even when there is, or has been, no distinct consciousness of it. The great aim of every awakening sermon that we preach, is to bring the sinner to the distinct consciousness of what he *is*, and *is doing*, as a free moral agent.

And observe, the aim of the sermon is not simply to aid the memory of the sinner—to furnish him an inventory or catalogue of his past transgressions—but, in the strict meaning of the expressive phrase, *to bring him to—to bring him to himself*. The object of every awakening sermon, and the end had in view by the Holy Spirit when He sets it home, is to bring the sinner to a distinct self-consciousness in regard to sin—to make him realize the awful truth, that during his whole past life of thoughtlessness and unconsciousness of what he has been, and been about, his Will has been active, and that from the inmost centre to the outward circumference, this action has been criminal; and still more than this, to make him realize, that *now*, at this very instant, his Will is setting itself with a deep, and as yet to him, *unconscious* determination towards evil, as an ultimate end of action. The object of conviction, in short, is to impart to the sinner a conscious knowledge of that sin, the major part of which came into existence without his conscious knowledge, but by no means without his Will.

We need only take a passage that frequently occurs in the

common Christian experience to see the truth of the view here presented. How often the Christian *finds* himself already in a train of thought, or of feeling, that is contrary to the divine law. Notice that he did *not* go into this train of thought or feeling deliberately, and with a distinct consciousness of what he was doing. The first he knows is, that he is already caught in the process. Thought and feeling in this instance have been *unconsciously* exercised in accordance with that central and abiding determination of the Will towards self, of which we have spoken; in other words, the Will has been *unconsciously* putting forth its action, in and through the powers of thought and feeling, as the self-reproach and sense of guilt consequent upon such exercises of the soul, are proof positive. The moment the Christian man comes to distinct consciousness in regard to this action that has been going on, "without his thinking of it," (as we say in common parlance,) he acknowledges it as criminal action, responsible action, action of the Will. The fact that he was not thinking—that the Will was acting unconsciously—subtracts nothing from his sense of guilt in the case.

And if there is unconscious action of the Will in these instances, which occur in the every-day experience of the individual Christian, much more should we expect to find unconscious action in the case of that deepest and primal movement of the Will which is denominated the Fall. If, in the instance of the development or unfolding of sin, there is much of this unconscious voluntary action, much more should we expect to find it in that instance when the profound basis itself, for this development, was laid. If there is mystery in the stalk above ground, much more must we expect to find it in the dark long root under ground. The fall of the human Will unquestionably occurs back of consciousness, and in a region beyond the reach of it. Certainly no one of the posterity of Adam was ever conscious of that act whereby his Will fell from God; and even with regard to Adam himself, the remark of Augustine is true—that he had already fallen before he ate the forbidden fruit. This remark is strictly true, and characterized by those two traits in which Augustine never had a superior—depth and penetration. The act of conscious transgression in the case of Adam sprung from an evil nature that had already been unconsciously generated in his Will. He would not have eaten of the tree, if he had not in his soul already fallen from God.

We may, in this connection, add furthermore, that the other great change which occurs in the human Will—viz., its renovation by the Holy Spirit, and its determination to God as an

ultimate end, consequent thereon—also occurs below the sphere of consciousness. All acknowledge that there is no consciousness of the regenerating act itself, but only of its consequences; and yet, even the most careful theologian must acknowledge, that there is action of the Will of some sort in this instance; that the renovating action is in the Will and in accordance with its freedom, though by no means, as in the case of sin, to be referred solely to the Will.

Enough has been said to show, that, unless we would unclothe most of human existence of its responsibility, we must assume the possibility and reality of an action of the Will, which is unaccompanied by distinct consciousness on the part of the individual man. And this is eminently true of that deepest action of the Will, by which a nature is generated, and a character is originated. That action of the human Will, which is denominated its fall, which lies under the whole sinful history and development of the individual man—which is the ground and source of all his conscious transgression—is, without contradiction, unconscious action. The moral consciousness of man, taken at its very rise, is the consciousness of guilt—which fact shows that the responsible action, lying under it, as its just cause and valid ground, *has already occurred*. If there is any guilt in falling from God, the human soul incurs that guilt in every instance, without distinct consciousness of the process by which it is brought about. If the origination of a sinful nature—of an abiding wrong state of the Will—is a criminal procedure on the part of the soul, and justly exposes it to the Divine Anger, it is yet a procedure that occurs unconsciously to the soul itself. And in saying this, we are manufacturing no theory, but simply setting forth the simple actual facts of the case. There is no avoiding the conclusion, unless we are bold enough to affirm that only that portion of a sinner's life is responsible and guilty, during which he sins deliberately, and with the consciousness that he is sinning.

We have called attention to this fact, that the human Will can and does put forth its deepest action below the sphere of consciousness, to prepare the way for the investigation of the connection of original sin, as found in each individual, with the fall of Adam. If this hypothesis of the unconscious action of the Will has been established, the only serious objection will have been removed, that can be made to what we suppose is the Scriptural statement of the doctrine of the connexion of the individual with Adam, contained in the Westminster Assembly's Catechism. According to the form of doctrine laid down by that body of profound and learned divines, each individual of the human race is supposed to have been in some way respon-

sibly present in Adam, and responsibly sharing in his apostacy from God. The statement in the creed which they drew up, is as follows:—"The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation *sinned in him and fell with him* in his first transgression." And the two strongest texts which they cite in proof of the truth of their creed, are these: "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners." (Rom. v. 19.) "In Adam all die." (1 Cor. xv. 22.)

Now it is to be remembered, that these men were making distinct and scientific statements, and their language, consequently, is not to be regarded as merely metaphorical. It must, therefore, be understood in the same way that scientific language is always to be understood—to be taken in its literal meaning, unless a palpable contradiction or absurdity is involved in so doing. In this doctrinal and scientific statement, then, it is affirmed, that all men sinned in Adam, and fell with Adam in his first transgression. This implies and teaches that all men were, in some sense, co-existent in Adam, otherwise they could not have sinned *in* him. It teaches that all men were, in some sense, co-agent in Adam, otherwise they could not have fallen *with* him. The mode of this co-existence and co-agency of the whole human race in the first man, they do not, it is true, attempt to set forth; but their language distinctly implies that they believed there was such a co-existence and co-agency, whether it could be explained or not. They regarded Adam not merely as an individual, but as a common person; as having a generic as well as individual character. They taught that he was substantially the race of mankind, and that his whole posterity existed in him. Consequently, whatever befell Adam, befell the race. In Adam's fall, the race fell. And what is to be particularly noted is, that they did not regard the fall of Adam, considered as an individual, as any more guilty than the fall of each and every one of his posterity, or that original sin was any the less guilt in his posterity than it was in him. So far as responsibility was concerned, Adam and his posterity were all *alike* guilty of apostacy. They were all involved in a common condemnation, because they were all *alike* concurrent in the fall. The *race* fell in Adam, and consequently each individual of the race was in some mysterious, yet real manner, existent in this common parent of all.

It is on this ground that they taught that original sin is real sin—is guilt. The sinful nature they held, could be properly charged upon every child of Adam, as a nature for

which he, and not his Creator,* was responsible, and which rendered him obnoxious to the eternal displeasure of God—even though, as in the case of infants dying before the dawn of self-consciousness, this nature should never have manifested itself in conscious transgression. Every child of Adam fell from God, in Adam, and in company with Adam, and therefore is justly chargeable with all that Adam is chargeable with, and precisely on the same grounds, viz., on the ground that his fall was not necessitated, but self-determined. For the Will of Adam was not the Will of a single isolated individual merely: it was also, and besides this, the Will of the human species—the human Will generically. If he fell freely, so did his posterity—yet not one after another, and each by himself, as the series of individuals in which the one seminal human nature manifests itself, were born into the world, but all together and all at once, in that first transgression, which stands a most awful and awfully pregnant event at the beginning of human history.

The aim of the Westminster symbol accordingly, and, it may be added, of all the creeds on the Augustinian side of the controversy, was to combine two elements, each having truth in it—to teach the fall of the human race as a unity, and, at the same time, recognize the existence, freedom, and guilt of the individual in the fall. Accordingly they locate the individual in Adam, and make him, in some mysterious but real manner, a responsible partaker in Adam's sin—a guilty sharer, and, in some solid sense of the word, *co-agent* in a common apostacy. As proof of this assertion, we shall quote from a few of the leading authors on this side of the great controversy.

Augustine, although the first to philosophize upon this difficult point, in order to bring it within the limits of a doctrinal system, has, nevertheless, as it seems to us, not been excelled by any of his successors in the profundity and comprehensiveness of his views. He is explicit in teaching the oneness of the human race in Adam, and of the fall of Adam and his posterity in the first transgression. In his work on the desert and remission of sin, he says: "All men at that time sinned in Adam, since, in his nature, all men were as yet that one man."† And the sentiment is repeated still more distinctly in that most elaborate of his treatises—*De Civitate Dei*; a work which was the fruit of mature reason, and ripe Christian experience, and which, notwithstanding the crudity of some of its speculations on subjects pertaining to the sensuous nature of man, and to

* Nor Adam, considered as an *individual* merely.

† In Adamo omnes tunc peccaverunt. quando in ejus natura adhuc omnes ille unus fuerunt.—*De pec. mer. et rem.* iii. 7.

physical nature generally, is unrivalled for the depth and clearness of its insight into all that is distinctively and purely spiritual. "We were all *in* that one man, since we *were* all that one man, who lapsed into sin through that woman, who was made from him previous to transgression. The form in which we were to live as individuals had not been created and assigned to us, man by man, but that seminal nature was in existence, from which we were to be propagated."* In the words of Neander, "Augustine supposed not only that that bondage, under the principle of sin, by which sin is its own punishment, was transmitted by the progenitor of the human race to his posterity: but also that the first transgression, as an act, was to be imputed to the whole human race—that the guilt and the penalty were propagated from one to all. This participation of all in Adam's transgression, Augustine made clear to his own mind in this way: Adam was the representative of the whole race, and bore in himself the entire human nature and kind, in germ, since it was from him that it unfolded itself. And this theory would easily blend with Augustine's speculative form of thought, as he had appropriated to himself the Platonico-Aristotelian realism, in the doctrine of general conceptions, and conceived of general conceptions as the original types of the kind realized in individual things.†"

Calvin, though not so explicit as his predecessor Augustine, or as some of his successors, in regard to the precise nature of the individual's connection with Adam, yet leaves no doubt in the mind of the reader that he believed in the original oneness of Adam and his posterity, in the act of apostacy. He says: "It is certain that Adam was not only the progenitor, but, as it were, the root of mankind, and therefore all the race were necessarily vitiated in his corruption." Again he says: "He who pronounces that we were all dead in Adam, does also, at the same time, plainly declare that we were implicated in the guilt of his sin. For no condemnation could reach those who were perfectly clear from all charge of iniquity," [as Adam's posterity would be, were each and every man merely a distinct and isolated individual, existing entirely by himself.] Again he says: "No other explanation, therefore, can be given of our being said to be in Adam, than that his transgression not only procured misery and ruin for himself, but also precipitated our

* Omnes enim fuimus in illo uno, quando omnes fuimus ille unus, qui per feminam lapsus est in peccatum, quæ de illo facta est ante peccatum, Nondum erat nobis singillatim creata et distributa forma, in qua singuli viveremus; sed jam natura erat seminalis ex qua propagaremur.—*De Civ. Dei.* xiii. 14.

† Torrey's Neander, ii. 609.

nature into similar destruction; and that not by his personal guilt as an individual, which pertains not to us, but because he infected all his descendants with the corruption into which he had fallen."*

John Owen is more explicit still, and he unquestionably reflects the views of the Westminster divines, to say nothing of his general profundity and clearness on all points of systematic theology. In his treatise, entitled "A Display of Arminianism,"† in connection with some other answers to the objection that original sin is not voluntary, and therefore cannot be sin, in the sense of guilt, he expressly affirms that it is voluntary, in some sense of that word—that it has the element of free self-determination in it. "But, thirdly," he says, "in respect to our wills, we are not thus innocent neither, for we all sinned in Adam, as the apostle affirmeth. Now all sin is voluntary, say the remonstrants, [the party whom Owen was opposing, but whose statement in this case he was willing to grant,] and therefore Adam's transgression was our voluntary sin also, and that in divers respects; *first*, in that his voluntary act is imputed to us as ours, by reason of the covenant which was made with him in our behalf; but because this consisting in an imputation, must needs be extrinsical to us; therefore, *secondly*, we say that Adam, being the root and head of all human kind, and we all branches from that root, all parts of that body whereof he was the head, his will may be said to be ours; we were then all that one man, (*omnes eramus unus ille homo*, Aug.,) we were all in him, and had no other will but his; so that though that (*viz.*, Adam's will) be extrinsical unto us, considered as particular persons, yet it (*viz.*, Adam's will) is intrinsical, as we are all parts of one common nature; as in him we sinned, so in him we had a will of sinning." In a passage in his "*Vindiciæ Evangelicæ*,"‡ he also says, "By Adam sin entered into the world, so that all sinned in him, and are made sinners thereby—so that also his sin is called the 'sin of the world;' in him all mankind sinned, and his sin is imputed to them."

One more quotation shall suffice, in corroboration of the view presented of the oneness of Adam and his posterity, in respect both to the act and the guilt of apostacy, and this shall be from Jonathan Edwards. In his treatise upon original sin, after citing the passage, "By one man sin entered into the world," he adds, "this passage implies that sin became *universal*

* Institutes—Book ii., chap. i. Allen's Trans.

† Works, V. 127. Russell's Ed.

‡ Works, VIII. p. 222. Russell's Ed.

in the world, and not merely (which would be a trifling, insignificant assertion) that one man, who was made first, sinned first, before other men sinned; or that it did not so happen that many men began to sin just together at the same moment." The latter part of the verse (he goes on to say) "and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, shows that, in the eye of the Judge of the world, in Adam's first sin *all* sinned; not only *in some sort*, but all sinned *so* as to be exposed to that *death* and final destruction, which is the proper *wages of sin*."* In the third chapter of this treatise he combats the objection made against the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity—"that such imputation is unjust and unreasonable, inasmuch as Adam and his posterity are not one and the same," (one of the principal objections to the doctrine, and a fatal one, if it can be maintained.) He combats it by denying the truth of the affirmation, that Adam and his posterity are not one and the same, and by establishing the contrary position by as profound and truthful a course of speculation as ever emanated from his mind. "I think" (he says) "it would go far towards directing us to the more clear and distinct conceiving and right stating of this affair, (of original sin,) were we steadily to bear this in mind: that God, in each step of his proceeding with Adam, in relation to the covenant or constitution established with him, looked on his posterity as being *one with him*. * * * Therefore, I am humbly of opinion, that if any have supposed the children of Adam to come into the world with a *double guilt*: one, the guilt of Adam's sin; another, the guilt arising from their having a corrupt heart, they have not so well conceived of the matter. The *guilt* a man has on his soul at his first existence is one and simple, viz., the guilt of the original apostacy, the guilt of the sin by which the species first rebelled from God. * * The *first existing* of a corrupt disposition in the hearts of Adam's posterity is not to be looked upon as sin belonging to them, *distinct* from their participation of Adam's first sin: it is, as it were, the *extended pollution* of that sin, through the whole tree, by virtue of the constituted *union* of the branches with the root; or the *inherence* of the sin of that head of the species in the members, in the consent and concurrence of the hearts of the members, with the head in that first act." Edwards also quotes with approbation the following from Stapfer: "It is objected against the imputation of Adam's sin, that we never committed the same sin with Adam, neither in number nor in

* The italics are Edwards's, and the italics of Edwards are always significant.

kind. I answer, we should distinguish here between the physical act itself, which Adam committed, and the morality of the action and consent to it. If we have respect only to the external act, to be sure it must be confessed that Adam's posterity did not put forth their hands to the forbidden fruit: in which sense that act of transgression, and that fall of Adam, cannot be physically one with the sin of his posterity. But if we consider the morality of the action, [*i. e.*, the voluntary ground of it,] and what consent there is to it, it is altogether to be maintained that his posterity committed the same sin both in number and in kind, inasmuch as they are to be looked upon as consenting to it: for where there is a consent to a sin, there the same sin is committed. Seeing, therefore, that Adam, with all his posterity, constitute but one moral person, and are united in the same covenant, and are transgressors of the same law, they are also to be looked upon as having, in a moral estimation, committed the same transgression of the law both in manner and in kind." Edwards finally remarks, that all the objections that can be brought against the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, are summed up in this assumption and assertion—that Adam and his posterity are *not one*, but entirely *distinct agents*: this assumption he earnestly denies, and enters into a long and subtle investigation, well worthy any man's study, of what is meant by personal identity, to show that there is no absurdity or contradiction in the hypothesis, that, by the divine establishment and constitution, all of Adam's posterity were, in some real and important sense, in him and one with him.

Any one who will take the pains to study the history of the doctrine of original sin, and to trace its development, will find that the more profound minds in the Christian church have ever sought to relieve the subject of those difficulties which encompass it, by this doctrine of the oneness of Adam with his posterity. A mystery overhangs, and, perhaps, ever must overhang the nature and possibility of this oneness; but this mystery being once waived, or put up with by the mind, the principal difficulties that beset the doctrine of a sinful nature originated antecedently to all consciousness, and beginning to manifest itself in the case of every individual with the first dawn of self-consciousness, disappear. Granting the possibility and the fact of the individual's fall in Adam and with Adam, then it is easy to see how this fall can be charged as guilt upon the individual, and the sinful nature be truly and really a self-determined and responsible nature, deserving and incurring the wrath of God. Original sin, by this hypothesis, is seen to be the work of the creature, and not the Creator, the chief peculiarity in the case

being, that it was originated by the whole race, and for the whole race, not as it exists in the historical series of its individual members, but as it existed, a seminal and common nature in the first man.

With regard to the possibility of such a co-existence of Adam and his posterity, little can be said, although the more the mind reflects upon the subject, the less surprising does it seem. One thing is certain, that the mysteriousness of the subject has not deterred the human mind from receiving the doctrine. We see the clearest and deepest minds of the church—men of unquestioned intellectual power, and of profound insight into their own hearts, drawn, as by a spell, to this hypothesis, as the best theory by which to free the doctrine of original sin from its principal difficulties: and this fact of itself constitutes a strong ground for the belief that the truth lies in this direction.

1. We would merely call attention, however, to the fact, that the doctrine of the oneness and co-existence of the race in the first man, by no means contradicts what we know from physiology, but rather finds a corroboration from it. When the first individuals of a new species are created out of nothing by the Creator of all things, the *species*, as well as these individuals, is created. The remaining individuals of the species—the posterity of the first pair—do not come into existence each by a new fiat, like that which called the first into being, but by a propagation. The primordial elements of all the individuals of the series are created, when the first pair of the species is created, and then are developed into a series of individuals. Any catastrophe, therefore, any radical change that befalls these first individuals, affects the whole species, and in precisely the same way. If that science, whose business it is to investigate the nature and mutual relations of the species and the individual, and to give an account of the development of the creation of God, teaches anything, it teaches this.

2. The other principal objection—that the individual was never conscious of this fall in Adam, has been removed by what has been advanced in regard to the possibility of a voluntary action that is deeper than consciousness. If there can be, and actually is, action of the human Will, unaccompanied by self-consciousness, then it is not absurd or self-contradictory to affirm that the Will of the whole species, including the Will of every individual within it, fell in the first man.

The doctrine of original sin, then, as stated in the Westminster Catechism, taken in its strict and literal acceptation, we deem to be in accordance with the teaching of Scripture on this subject. Only put up with the inexplicability of the one-

ness, and co-existence of Adam and his posterity—only grant this assumption, which all the analogies in the world of physical nature, and all the investigations of physiology yet seem to corroborate—and we can hold to a sinful nature, and a sinful nature that is guilt. We know of no other theory that does not in the end either annihilate sin, by recognizing no sin but that of single volitions, or else, while asserting a sinful nature, does it at the expense of human freedom and responsibility, and thus lands ultimately where the other does. And surely a theory, which removes the real and honest difficulties that cling to one of the most vexed questions in theology, ought not to be rejected merely on the ground of a mystery that attaches to one of its elements. Manifest absurdity and self-contradiction would be the only valid grounds for rejecting it; and these, we think, cannot be fixed upon it.

In conclusion, we would say, that we cannot think, with some, that such speculations into a difficult doctrine, like that of original sin, are valueless—that they merely baffle the mind and harden the heart. We rise from this investigation with a more profound belief than ever, in the doctrine of the innate and total depravity of man—of his bondage to evil, and his guilt in this bondage. It is only when we turn away our eye from the particular exhibitions of sin to that evil nature that lies under them all, and lies under them all the while—it is only when we turn away from what we *do* to what we *are*, that we become filled with that deep sense of guilt, that profound self-abasement, before the infinite purity of God, and that utter self-despair, which alone fit us to be the subjects of renewing and sanctifying grace. If the church and the ministry of the present day need any one thing more than another, it is profound views of sin; and if the current theology of the day is lacking in any one thing, it is in that thorough-going, that truly philosophic, and, at the same time, truly edifying theory of sin, which runs like a strong muscular cord through all the soundest theology of the church.
