

What saith the Scripture? is the first enquiry of the Protestant Christian; and, subordinate to this highest standard, he may further ask, What saith the Church? We shall in this essay endeavour to present the replies furnished by these two authorities.

We shall analyze the teaching of Scripture and of the Church creeds by means of four questions which will, we think, cover the entire ground.

I. What is the relation of childhood to the fall?

II. What is the relation of childhood to the Atonement?

III. How do these two relations mutually limit each other?

IV. How do they form the basis of the child's relation to the Christian Church?

These four questions will enable us to define clearly the moral status from which the child enters upon its probation.

I. What is the relation of childhood to the fall? The Church answers this question by three dogmatic statements which constitute the doctrine of original sin. 1. All men from their birth inherit a sinful nature. 2. They inherit death and various sufferings as the penalty of sin. 3. They inherit guilt or desert of God's displeasure as the result of their sinful nature. To the first proposition all assent except the Pelagians. So to the second though there are various interpretations of the term death. The third proposition is matter of wider difference of opinion.