

I.

DIFFERENT THEORIES RESPECTING THE MORAL CONDITION OF INFANTS.

Different views have been taken on this subject by theological writers, which of course have been modified, or mainly formed by the theological systems they had adopted. Some of these we will briefly review:

1. There is *the doctrine of natural purity*, which denies the depravity of human nature, and asserts its moral rectitude. Of course all who take this position on the general condition of men, will regard children as perfectly pure, until they are corrupted by evil example. This theory is contrary to the direct testimony of the Holy Scriptures, which declare man's natural condition to be one of depravity and unholiness, and his nature to be prone to evil. It of necessity ignores the work and office of the Holy Spirit in renewing and purifying the heart, which is explicitly revealed in the Bible. It is equally opposed to what we observe in the universal tendency to forget God, and sin against Him, which characterizes our race. This amply corroborates the Bible testimony respecting the sinfulness of man's nature. No power of example can account for the universal aversion to holiness, the wickedness and unbelief that are so inseparably interwoven with the history of our race, in every age and clime. The example of the wicked could present no temptation to a perfectly holy being. This theory increases our danger by hiding it from sight.

2. Some maintain *that the soul is pure in itself, but that the defilement arises from its connection with the body*. They forget that moral impurity cannot belong to any merely corporeal organization. From this union of soul and body duties and dangers arise that else would not exist; but the sin or evil must exist in the mind. It is the possession of an unconstrained will that constitutes us responsible and moral beings. Those who receive

f appeal. "To
According to this
Why examine the
e conclusions to
of the whole
for truth, if we
an one already
omprehended in
ers, assert more
the diversity of
ongst us? Our
d, as far as they
lications of the
ponding vague-
on an important
r sense of duty.
tized children to
y this, and inter-
onclusion, which
ws of the nature
e Church—and
t determine our
after baptism.
ics is not neces-
bered, that an
uilding without
assumption, with-
solution mainly

Holy Scriptures
respecting the
ne Atonement of