

Original Communications.

SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN.*

"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe."—Milton.

PROPOSITION 2.—*The souls of all mankind are in this deplorable condition.*—We have already seen that human nature is entirely corrupt. Our present proposition asserts that all are corrupt. It will be granted, we presume, that all the human race participate one common nature. (See Acts xix. 26.) But that nature is totally polluted; therefore all are polluted. It will, we suppose, be allowed also that death is the consequence of sin. (See Romans v. 12—14.) But all die; it follows therefore that all are sinful. But "to the law and to the testimony." With respect to the Antediluvians, it is written, Genesis vi. 12., that, "God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." The term "earth" in the former part of the verse is, by a common figure, put for its inhabitants, all of whom were "corrupt,"—corrupt in nature. But the latter part of it regards the practice of sin,—*"all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth."* Psalm xiv. 2, 3, supports this position. "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no not one." The Almighty is here represented as inspecting the principles and practices of the human race; and the result of the Divine inspection is this: "They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no not one." Romans iii. 10—12, is a quotation from the above passage, and adduced by St. Paul to prove the universal sinfulness of man: It is therefore strongly to the point. The text affirms that, "There is none righteous, no not one." That "there is none that understandeth." That "there is none that seeketh after God." That "they are all gone out of the way." That "they are altogether become unprofitable." That "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Isaiah attests the same truth. Chapter liii. 6, he says, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all." The plain doctrine of this text is, *All have gone astray from God both in heart and life, and Christ hath died for all.* Again: chap. lxiv. 6, he says, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we do all fade as a leaf." This is a melancholy, but true description of the human race. *All are polluted, and all are mortal.* Romans iii. 19, assures us that "*all the world*" is "*guilty*" before God. And verse 23d, asserts that "*All have sinned*, and come short of the glory of God." Romans v. 12, declares that "*death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*" And verse 18th affirms that "*by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.*" 2 Corinthians v. 14, testifies the same truth. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." "Dead in trespasses and sins." Galatians iii. 22 speaks to the same effect. "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin." And St. John, 1 Epistle, chapter v, verse 8, adds, "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." These plain scripture quotations will, we feel persuaded, convince every unprejudiced reader that the proposition before him is true: that total impurity of nature is the unalienable inheritance of every human being.

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PROPOSITION 3.—*The corruption of all men is natural and hereditary: In other words, Man is born polluted, and derives his pollution from his parents.*—In proof of this proposition we offer the following scriptures: Genesis v. 3, "And Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." This passage cannot possibly refer to the configuration of the body. Moses could never intend to amuse mankind by informing them that Adam begat a man, not an irrational animal. Neither could he purpose assuring them that Adam transmitted to Seth a pure nature; for that was not "*his image.*" But he evidently intended to teach them that Adam imparted to his children pollution of soul and mortality of body, as well as existence; for these were emphatically "*his own likeness.*" Genesis viii. 21, "For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." The word here rendered "*youth*" signifies childhood and infancy, all the earlier years from the birth. The former of these passages speaks of man *before*, and the latter speaks of man immediately *after*, the flood; and they both assert his natural, hereditary corruption. Job ii. 12, "Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt." This text exhibits the natural condition of man. He is "*born the colt of a wild ass*!" Again, Job xiv. 4, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." The word thing is not in the original; person is obviously understood. The question then is, Can parents defiled and guilty, transmit purity as well as being to their offspring? The negative to this question, "Not one," shows the thing to be impossible. And, again, Job xv. 14, "What is man that he should be clean? and he that is born of a woman that he should be righteous?" The remarkable rendering of the Seventy is as follows: "Who shall be clean from filth? Not one; even though his life on earth be a single day." Psalm li. 5, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." This text plainly asserts that human nature is corrupt *before* birth,—that its pollution is coeval with its existence,—and that the impurity of children is *derived* from their parents. Psalm lviii. 3, "The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." They are alienated from God "*from the womb*;" and they go astray from their very birth. Proverbs xxii. 15, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child." Utter indisposition to good, and a strong propensity to evil is deeply rooted in the inmost nature of every "*child.*" They are fastened to this spirit as by strong cords; so the original imports. John iii. 6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Our Lord here teaches us that we are "*born*" with impure natures; and that we *inherit* our impurity from our parents. Ephesians ii. 3, "And were by nature children of wrath even as others." Sinful, and liable to punishment; not indeed by bad education, or by bad example, or both, but "*by nature.*" Some of these passages taken singly prove the proposition; but taken together, they exhibit it in a prominent light, and demonstrate it beyond reasonable debate. They teach us to trace our pollution to our birth and conception; that we derived it from our parents, and that they derived it from theirs; and so onward, till we arrive at the original pair.

PROPOSITION 4.—*This total, universal, hereditary impurity originated with Adam and Eve, our great progenitors.*—The original state of our first parents was a state of holiness and happiness; but its perpetuity depended upon their continual obedience. Under the influence of the temptation of Satan they transgressed the law of their Maker, and thereby forfeited both their purity and felicity. The penalty of the law which they violated was death: they died therefore. Their bodies were subjected to pain and dissolution; their souls were separated from God and holiness; and

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