

creatures different degrees of happiness and privilege; and this, as we formerly showed, is a view of His position and actings in the matter, which is utterly inadequate to throw any light upon the difficulty, unless it be assumed that men, after and notwithstanding the loss of these chartered benefits, retained all the ordinary rights and privileges of citizenship, *i.e.*, retained the power of escaping by their own strength, or by some universal grace furnished to them all, from at least permanent misery,—in other words, unless it be denied that men are now, in point of fact, in that condition of moral depravity and actual sinfulness, which Scripture, consciousness, and observation, all concur in proving to attach to them.

Here, we may remark by the way, there is brought out a confirmation of our previous position,—*viz.*, that Dr Payne's doctrine of chartered benefits only being lost in Adam, tends to involve him (though he makes no such application of it) in the application which the Papists make of their doctrine, that original righteousness is supernatural,—*viz.*, that men, though fallen, have still full power to do what God requires of them. There is no view of God's actings in this whole matter which at all accords with the actual, proved realities of the case, except that which represents Him in the light of a just Judge punishing sin,—a view which implies that men's want of original righteousness and the corruption of their whole nature have a penal character, are punishments righteously inflicted on account of sin, not indeed by the positive communication of depravity, but through the just withdrawal of divine grace, and of the influences of the Holy Spirit. And the only explanation which Scripture affords of this mysterious constitution of things is, that men have the guilt of Adam's first sin imputed to them or charged against them, so as to be legally exposed to the penalties which he incurred; and that this imputation to them of the guilt or *reatus* of his first sin is based upon his being their federal head or legal representative in the covenant which God made with him. All this, we think, is clearly enough indicated in Scripture; but beyond this Scripture does not go;—and here, therefore, our reasonings and speculations should terminate, or if they are carried at all beyond this point, they should still be strictly confined to the one single object of answering, so far as may be necessary, the objections of opponents; and lest, even in answering objections, we should be tempted to in-

dulge in unwarranted and presumptuous speculations, we should take care not to extend our reasonings beyond the limits which the logical necessities of the case require us to traverse; *i.e.*, we should restrict them to the one single object of proving—for this is all that, in the circumstances, is logically incumbent upon us—that it cannot be proved that this constitution of things necessarily involves any injustice.

Among the general suggestions that have been thrown out for the purpose of answering objections *within the limits now specified*, there is one which we have been always disposed to regard as reasonable and plausible,—as an idea which might be legitimately entertained, because, at least, not opposed to the statements of Scripture or the analogy of faith, and as fitted—though certainly not furnishing a solution of the great difficulty—to afford some relief and satisfaction to the mind in contemplating this mysterious subject. It is this: that God, in His wisdom and sovereignty,—following out, as it were, the fall of the angels who kept not their first estate,—resolved to create a rational and responsible being of a different class or description, differently constituted and differently circumstanced from the angels, and to subject this being to moral probation, having resolved to make the trial or probation of the first being of this particular class or description, as a specimen of the whole, the trial or probation of all this class of creatures descending from him; so that the result of the trial in his case should be applied to, and should determine the condition and destiny of, the race, just as if each individual of this class of beings had been actually subjected to trial or probation in his own person, with the same result as was exhibited in the first specimen of it. We think it might be shown that the application of this general idea, taken merely as a hypothesis, would furnish some materials that are fitted to stop the mouths of objectors, and to show that, while the burden of proving that this constitution necessarily involves injustice lies on them, they are not able to accomplish this. But we will not enlarge in the way of attempting to make this application of the idea, lest we should seem to be attaching to it an undue value and importance, or appear to be in any measure suspending the truth of the doctrines we have been inculcating upon *its* soundness and validity; and we hasten to observe, that the only reason why we have mentioned it, is because we think that there is a beautiful harmony between it and the

Protestant doctrine, that man's original righteousness was natural and not supernatural; that what Adam lost for himself and his posterity was not chartered benefits merely, but integral constituent elements of his moral constitution; and that these two views afford mutual corroboration.

We can scarcely conceive, in any case, of God directly and immediately creating a moral and responsible being, who did not possess inherently, as a proper integral part of his moral constitution, entire rectitude or conformity to God's law; and the difficulty of conceiving of this is increased, when the being supposed is regarded as a specimen or representative of a class of beings who are to be the subjects of a great moral experiment, while yet the experiment is to be completed or decided in the case of this one specimen as representing them all. We feel, upon such an assumption, as if there was something like a claim in equity, that this being—mutable indeed, and left to the freedom of his own will, else there could not be a full and perfect moral probation of him—should possess righteousness and holiness as qualities of his moral constitution; or, to use language formerly quoted, as employed by Baius, and condemned by the Church of Rome, that this was "*debita integritati primæ conditionis*;" and also, that he should have every advantage, in point of circumstances as well as constitution, for doing all that God required of him,—for succeeding in the probation to which he was to be subjected. It is true, indeed, that God might have superadded to his proper natural constitution supernatural gifts or graces, which would have placed Adam in equally favourable circumstances for succeeding in the trial, as those which, in point of fact, he enjoyed by nature; but then he would not, in that case, have been a being inherently of the same class or description with his posterity, and of course his trial, whatever might have been the result of it, would not have fully illustrated the *same* principles and accomplished the *same* purposes.

#### Sec. IV.—*Corruption of Nature.*

We can now only advert very briefly to the next great feature, or constituent element, of the sinfulness of the estate into which man fell,—viz., the corruption of his whole nature, or that which is ordinarily, and most properly, called original sin. The Romanists generally contend that the sin which Adam entailed upon

his posterity consisted chiefly, if not exclusively, in the guilt of Adam's first sin imputed to them, and in the want of original righteousness, and say little or nothing about the corruption of his whole nature, or his moral depravity. They are not bound to deny this doctrine, for the Council of Trent has not condemned it; but neither are they bound to assert it, because the Council has abstained intentionally, as we formerly showed, from defining what are the ingredients or constituent elements of the *peccatum* which it declares that Adam transmitted to the whole human race. The Jansenists, accordingly, held themselves at liberty to maintain, with Augustine, an entire and positive corruption or depravity,—i.e., actual bias or tendency to sin as attaching to man's moral nature; while Romanists more generally have denied this, or admitted it only in a very vague and indefinite sense,—very much like the less evangelical Arminians,—and have regarded original sin as being a mere negation or privation,—the want of that original righteousness, which was merely a supernatural gift bestowed upon Adam, and forfeited not only for himself, but for his posterity, by his first sin. All the Reformers maintained, and most Protestant churches have ever since professed, that it is an actual feature in the character of fallen man, that he has a powerful predominating bias, tendency, or inclination to sin,—to depart from God, and to violate His laws. This is in many respects the most important feature or element of the estate of sin into which man fell, especially as it is the proximate cause or source of all his actual transgressions of the divine commandments. He not only does not bring with him into the world anything in his moral nature that involves or produces fear or love of God,—a desire to honour or serve Him; but he is, in virtue of the actual constitution of his moral nature, *as it exists*, wholly indisposed and averse to everything that is really accordant with God's will, and with the requirements of the law which He has imposed, and could not but impose, upon His intelligent and moral creatures. This is the view given us in the sacred Scriptures of the actual moral condition of human nature, and it is abundantly confirmed by experience. Though brought out fully by the Reformers, in opposition to the Pelagian views which generally prevailed at that time in the Church of Rome, it was neither affirmed nor denied by the Council of Trent,—i.e., directly, for it was

denied (as we shall afterwards see) by implication; and in the Church of Rome, as in every other church, this doctrine has ever proved a test of men's character,—those who were best acquainted with the word of God and their own hearts, and who had the deepest impressions of divine things, receiving and approving of it; and those who were deficient in these respects, and just in proportion to their deficiency, inclined to deny it altogether, or to explain it away, and practically to reduce the great and fearful reality which it asserts to insignificance or nonentity.

I am not called upon to attempt to establish the truth of this great doctrine of the corruption of man's whole nature, certainly and invariably producing actual transgressions of God's law; and I have had occasion, under the former heads, to advert fully to the relation which, in the history of the discussions of this subject, this entire corruption of nature has held, and should hold, to the other features or elements of the sinfulness of the estate into which man fell. On these grounds I do not mean to enter further into the consideration of it, but would only express my sense of the paramount importance of becoming familiar with the evidence from Scripture, consciousness, experience, and observation, on which this great doctrine rests,—of forming clear and accurate conceptions of all that the doctrine involves or implies,—and of fully and habitually realizing it; since this is not only the most important truth, both theoretically and practically, in a full view of what man's natural condition is,—and therefore indispensable to an acquaintance with the nature and application of the remedy that has been provided,—but since, more particularly, a full establishment in the assured belief of this corruption of man's whole nature, and the universality of actual transgression resulting from it as a great reality, is most directly and powerfully fitted to preserve from error, and to guide into all truth with respect to the other elements of the sinfulness of men's natural condition, and to lead certainly and immediately to the adoption of those practical steps on which the salvation of men individually is suspended.

This subject strikingly illustrates the necessity and importance of forming and fixing in our minds precise and definite conceptions upon theological subjects, so far as the word of God affords us materials for doing so. The main part of the decree of the Council of Trent upon the subject of original sin is sound and scriptural, so far as it goes; but being, for reasons which we have

explained, very vague and general in its statements, it did nothing to advance the cause of sound doctrine. It is not, indeed, directly and in itself chargeable with Pelagianism; but as it found a Pelagian spirit and tendency generally prevalent in the Church of Rome, so it has left it there, and allowed it to operate with undiminished force, exerting a most injurious influence upon men's whole conceptions of the gospel method of salvation, and, of course, upon their spiritual welfare. And what a contrast does the decree of the Council of Trent present to the clear, precise, and definite statements of our Shorter Catechism, in regard to the nature and constituent elements of the sinfulness of the estate into which man fell,—statements so well fitted to convey full and exact conceptions to the understanding, in regard to what man by nature really is, and thereby to impress the heart and to influence the conduct!

We have still to point out, in the doctrine of the Church of Rome upon this subject, what is not only defective, as being vague and indefinite, but positively erroneous; and to show how it is, that, by erroneous doctrines upon other subjects,—especially on baptismal justification and baptismal regeneration,—she has neutralized or rendered of none effect, practically at least, even what is sound and scriptural in her professed doctrine upon original sin.

#### Sec. V.—Concupiscence.

What is positively erroneous in the decree of the Council of Trent concerning original sin, is contained in the fifth and last section of their decree, and may be said to consist of two parts,—first, that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is conferred in baptism, not only is the guilt of original sin remitted, but everything in men which comes truly and properly under the head of sin is taken away; and, secondly, that concupiscence in baptized and regenerate persons is not truly and properly sin.

The first of these positions, *with certain explanations*, is usually admitted by Protestants to be true, *except in so far as it comprehends the second*. We shall therefore advert to the second one first; and in returning to the other, and illustrating the explanations and qualifications with which alone its truth can be admitted, we will have an opportunity of explaining how the Church of Rome neutralizes or undoes all that is sound and good in its pro-

fessed doctrine upon the general subject of original sin. By concupiscence, or evil desire in its technical sense, is meant substantially what is known more popularly under the name of indwelling sin. It designates what the apostle calls the law in the members warring against the law of the mind, or the struggle between the flesh and the spirit in renewed men; but with this important limitation, that as used in this particular controversy, it includes only the first risings or movements of the desires which tend or are directed towards what is evil, antecedently to their being deliberately consented to, and to the actual sin to which they tend or point being resolved upon or performed. It is often called the fuel (*fōmes*) of sin, as being that from which, when it is cherished and not subdued, actual transgressions proceed. The Apostle James\* undoubtedly distinguishes this concupiscence or *επιθυμία*, translated "lust" in our version, from the *ἀμαρτία* or sin which it produces when it has conceived; and this proves that there is something comprehended under the name of sin which concupiscence is not. But the statement does not necessarily imply more than this, and it determines nothing as to whether or not the *επιθυμία*, though of course not the same with the (sin) *ἀμαρτία* which it produces, be itself sinful. The Council of Trent denied that concupiscence in this sense, as comprehending the first risings or movements of desires tending to what is evil, but not deliberately consented to, is truly and properly sinful; and the opposite doctrine upon this subject generally maintained by Protestant churches, is thus expressed in our Confession (chap. vi., sec. 5): "This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin,"—a statement which is just formally and *in terminis*, and was evidently intended to be, a contradiction to the decree of the Council of Trent, and indeed can be fully and exactly understood only when viewed in connection with that decree and the controversy to which it has given rise. It will be proper to quote the words of the decree upon this point: "Manere autem in baptizatis concupiscentiam vel fomitem, hæc sancta synodus fatetur et sentit. . . . Hanc concupiscentiam, quam aliquando Apostolus peccatum appellat, sancta

\* James i. 14. 15.

synodus declarat ecclesiam catholicam nunquam intellexisse peccatum appellari, quod vere et proprie in renatis peccatum sit, sed quia ex peccato est et ad peccatum inclinat."\* And then it proceeds to anathematize any one who holds a different opinion. Father Paul tells us of an interesting circumstance connected with the discussions that took place in the council regarding this part of the decree. The proposed deliverance was assented to by all except a Carmelite friar of the name of Antoine Marinier, who objected to the council condemning as heretical, under an anathema, a position which unquestionably had, *in terminis*, the sanction of the Apostle Paul, and had also, as he alleged, the authority of Augustine. His opposition, however, received no support; but, on the contrary, it only recalled to the recollection of the council two very equivocal sermons which Marinier had preached before them, in which he had spoken in a very suspicious way about the duty of confiding only in God's mercies, and not trusting in our own good works; and confirmed the suspicions which these sermons had produced, that he was not far removed from the doctrine of the Protestants.†

The doctrine of Romanists upon this subject is intimately connected with the views they hold regarding man's moral constitution before the fall. Man, they think, in his own proper nature, or *in puris naturalibus*, as the schoolmen expressed it, though free from all positive tendency to sin, was not exempted from a struggle or want of harmony between the higher and the lower departments of his nature,—a struggle or discordance which was prevented from producing or leading to anything actually sinful only by the supernatural gift of original righteousness,—a gift which, though it did not preclude a struggle, or something like it, prevented any actual sinful result, until God was pleased to permit the fall. I do not say that it was their doctrine, in regard to the constitution of man's moral nature as unfallen, that led them to deny the sinfulness of concupiscence, or of the struggle between the flesh and the spirit in the regenerate; for I believe that the reverse of this was the true history of the case, and that it was their doctrine of the non-sinfulness of concupiscence in the regenerate that led to the invention of their notion about man being created without original righteousness, except as a super-

\* Sess. v. 5.

† Liv. ii., LXV.; vol. i., pp. 308-9 of Courayer.

natural quality added to the *pura naturalia*. There is but little information given us in Scripture bearing upon anything that preceded the fall of man; and both Protestants and Romanists have been much in the habit, and not unreasonably, of deducing their respective opinions as to what man was before the fall, chiefly from the views they have derived, respectively, from Scripture as to what man is as fallen, and what he is as renewed. But though the Popish view of the innocence of concupiscence in the regenerate, led to their notion of man's natural want of original righteousness, and to the consequent innocent struggle between the higher and the lower powers of his nature, rather than the reverse; yet the two doctrines manifestly harmonize with, and illustrate, each other: for it is evident, on the one hand, that if in man before his fall, viewed as *in puris naturalibus*, there was a struggle, or even a want of perfect harmony, between the higher and lower departments of his nature, this would countenance the notion that concupiscence in the regenerate, the cause of the struggle which undoubtedly exists in them, might not be sinful; and that, on the other hand, if concupiscence in the regenerate is not sin, this would countenance the notion that there might be such a struggle, or want of harmony, as is alleged, in man before the fall.

Two of the most striking and dangerous tendencies or general characteristics of the theology of the Church of Rome are,—first, exaggerating the efficacy and influence of external ordinances; and, secondly, providing for men *meriting* the favour of God and the rewards of heaven; and both these tendencies are exhibited in this single doctrine of the innocence or non-sinfulness of concupiscence. It magnifies the efficacy of baptism, which has so entirely removed from men everything which really possesses the nature of sin; and it puts men upon a most favourable vantage ground for meriting increase of grace and eternal life. Viewed in these aspects, this question, though it may appear at first sight a mere subtlety, becomes invested with no small practical importance. It will be observed that the Council of Trent, in their decree, distinctly admit that the apostle sometimes calls this concupiscence sin; and in their note upon the passage, they refer to the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, which contain those inspired declarations from which mainly Protestants have deduced the doctrine of the sinfulness of that

tendency to sin which remains in the regenerate, and of the first motions of evil desire, though not deliberately consented to or followed out. On the ground of the apostle's statements in these chapters, in which he certainly speaks of concupiscence in the regenerate as sin, the Romanists admit that there is a certain sense in which it may be called sin; but they allege that the only sense in which it can be called sin, is an improper or metaphorical one, or, as the council states it, that the apostle calls it sin, not because it is truly and properly sin, but because it proceeds from sin and inclines to sin,—or, as the Romish divines usually express it, because it is both the punishment of sin and the cause of sin. Protestants, of course, concur with them in regarding it as the punishment of sin, because the Scriptures represent the whole corruption of man's moral nature as a penal infliction imposed upon them through the withdrawal of divine grace, and of the influence of the Holy Spirit, in consequence of being involved in the guilt of Adam's first sin imputed to them; and in regarding it also as the cause of sin, as it is manifestly the immediate antecedent or proximate cause of the actual sins, in thought, word, and deed, which the regenerate commit,—*i.e.*, of sin in the more limited sense in which the word is used by the Apostle James, when he says that lust, or evil desire, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin. But Protestants also believe that lust or concupiscence in the regenerate, as including a remaining tendency towards what is sinful, and the first or earliest motions of this tendency in the heart, though not deliberately consented to and followed out, is itself truly and properly sinful. And the main proof of this position, which the Council of Trent condemned and anathematized, is to be found in those portions of the Epistle to the Romans in which the council admits that the apostle *calls* concupiscence and its first motions sin; and in which Protestants think they can show, in addition to the mere employment of the word *ἀμαρτία*, that both the particular statements made by the apostle, and the general course and tenor of his argument, prove that he uses it in its proper sense as implying *ἀνόμια*,—*i.e.*, a want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God, and as involving guilt or *reatus* on the part of those to whom it attaches.

It would be out of place here to enter into a critical examination of the meaning or meanings of *ἀμαρτία* in these chapters, in

order to establish this position. But one thing is very manifest, that it should require evidence of no ordinary strength and clearness to warrant men in maintaining that *that* is not truly and properly sin, which the apostle so frequently calls by that name, without giving any intimation that he understood it in an improper or metaphorical sense; and that if there be any subject with respect to which men ought to be more particularly scrupulous in departing, without full warrant, from the literal ordinary meaning of scriptural statements, it is when the deviation would represent *that* as innocent which God's word calls sinful,—a tendency which men's darkened understandings and sinful hearts are but too apt to encourage.

Now, the chief proofs which the Romanists commonly adduce in support of their doctrine upon this subject, and of the alleged improper or metaphorical use of the word sin by the apostle in treating of it, are some general statements of Scripture with regard to the effects of baptism and regeneration, and with regard to the general character and position in God's sight of the regenerate; and this brings us back again to the wider and more general position which is laid down in the fifth section of the decree on original sin, and in which the more limited and specific one we have now been considering is comprehended. It is this,\* that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ which is conferred in baptism, the guilt of original sin is taken away, and that the whole of that which has the true and proper nature of sin is removed. The Reformers complained that the Council of Trent did them injury in ascribing to them a direct and unqualified denial of this position, in the general terms in which it is put, and declared that, with certain explanations, they admitted it to be true, except in so far as it involved or comprehended a denial of the true and proper sinfulness of that lust or concupiscence, that remaining corruption of moral nature, which still attached to the regenerate.

It is important to observe that Calvin and other Protestants, in discussing this position as laid down by the Council of Trent, do not usually enlarge upon the identification here made of baptism and regeneration, or raise any controversy about this,

\* Si quis per Jesu Christi Domini nostri gratiam, quæ in baptisate confertur, reatum originalis peccati remitti negat, aut etiam asserit, non tolli totum id, quod veram et propriam peccati rationem habet, sed illud dicit tantum radi aut non imputari; anathema sit.

but just assume that baptism is regeneration, or rather that baptism may be here taken in the same sense as regeneration, as descriptive of that important era in a man's history, when God pardons his sins and admits him into the enjoyment of His favour. The Church of Rome holds that all this takes place invariably at and in baptism, believing in the doctrines both of baptismal justification and baptismal regeneration. Luther held some obscure notion of a similar kind, so far as regeneration is concerned; for he never thoroughly succeeded in throwing off the taint of Popish corruptions upon some points connected with the sacraments. The other Reformers certainly did not admit the Popish doctrines of baptismal justification and regeneration; but when the question as to the connection between baptism and regeneration was not under discussion at the time, they sometimes speak of baptism as if it were virtually identical with regeneration, just because the one is, in its general object and import, a sign or seal of the other,—because the baptism of an adult (and of course it is chiefly from adult baptism that we ought to form our general impressions as to what baptism is, and means), when the profession made in it is honest, or corresponds with the reality of the case, is a profession or declaration of his having been regenerated or born again, and having been admitted to the possession of all the benefits or privileges which are connected with regeneration. The Scriptures, in their more direct and formal statements about baptism, have respect chiefly, if not exclusively, to adult baptism, and assume the honesty or accuracy of the profession made in it; and the application of this consideration points out the futility of the arguments commonly adduced in support of baptismal regeneration, as usually taught by Papists and Prelatists. Upon the same ground, it is no uncommon thing for theologians, when they are not discussing the distinct and specific question of the connection that subsists generally or universally between baptism and regeneration, to use these words as virtually describing one and the same thing.

This is the true explanation of the fact, which appears at first sight to be startling, that Calvin and other theologians, in discussing this position of the Council of Trent, do not usually raise any difficulty as to what is here said about baptism, but virtually regulate their admissions and denials regarding it, and the grounds on which they support them, just as if what is here said of

baptism were said of regeneration, or the occasion when that grace of God is actually bestowed through which men's state and character are changed, and they escape from the consequence of being involved in the guilt of Adam's first sin. Calvin, accordingly, in discussing this part of the decree of the council in his *Antidote*, disclaiming the doctrine which it imputes to Protestants, and explaining how far they agreed and how far they differed with it, embodies his views in the following statement:—"Nos totum peccati reatum vere tolli in Baptismo, asserimus: ita ut quæ manent peccati reliquiæ, non imputentur. Quo res clarius pateat, in memoriam revocent lectores, duplicem esse Baptismi gratiam: nam et peccatorum remissio illic, et regeneratio nobis offertur. Remissionem plenam fieri docemus: regenerationem inchoari duntaxat, suosque totâ vitâ facere progressus. Proinde manet vere peccatum in nobis, neque per Baptismum statim uno die extinguitur: sed quia deletur reatus, imputatione nullum est."\*

It is held, then, by Protestants, that in baptism,—*i.e.*, according to the explanation above given, at that great era when men receive the grace of God in truth, be it when it may, for *that* is not the question *here*,—their whole guilt, or *reatus*, or liability to punishment—the guilt of Adam's first sin, in which they were involved, and the guilt of all their own past sins—is taken away, and that the reigning power or corruption in their natures is subdued, so that sin, in the sense of depravity, has no longer *dominion* over them. But, on the other hand, they contend, in opposition to the Church of Rome, that even after men have been baptized, justified, and regenerated, the corruption or depravity of their nature is not wholly taken away; and there still attaches to them as long as they live much that is truly and properly sinful, much that might, viewed with reference to its own intrinsic demerits, justly expose them to God's displeasure, though it is not now imputed to them for guilt and condemnation.

The grounds on which the Council of Trent, professing to interpret Scripture infallibly, maintains in opposition to this, that in baptism or regeneration everything which is truly and properly sinful is removed or taken away, as they are embodied in the decree itself, are these,—that God hates nothing in the regenerate; that there is no condemnation to those who are truly buried with

\* Calvin. Tractatus, p. 234. Amstel. 1667.

Christ by baptism unto death, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; that they have put off the old man, and have put on the new man, who is created after the image of God; and that they are called pure, holy, righteous, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus. It is manifest, however, that none of these statements of Scripture about the general character and position of the regenerate, bear precisely and immediately upon the point in dispute; and that just *from their generality* they do not necessarily preclude the possibility of its being true, if other portions of Scripture seem to warrant the belief, that there is still something even about these men so described, which is in its own nature sinful, and might justly expose them to God's displeasure. That there is not now anything charged against them as involving guilt, *reatus*, or as *de facto* exposing them to condemnation and danger; that, as denominated from what now forms their guiding principle and determines their general character, they are no longer ungodly and depraved, but holy and righteous; that they are the objects of God's special love and complacency, and will assuredly be admitted by Him at last to the enjoyment of His own presence,—*all* this is certain, for it is clearly and explicitly taught in Scripture. But Scripture just as clearly and explicitly teaches, that even those persons, of whom all this is predicated, have still, so long as they remain upon earth, something sinful about them; that they are not only sinning in fact, by actual transgressions of God's law and by shortcomings in the discharge of duty, but also that the corruption or depravity of their nature has not been wholly taken away, but still manifests its presence and operation; and that, in estimating what there is about them that is truly sinful, we must take in this remaining corruption, and all its motions, as well as their actual transgressions of God's commandments. If this be indeed taught in Scripture, then we are bound to receive and admit it; and even if there were far greater difficulty than there is in reconciling it with other statements made there with regard to the character and position of these men, this would afford no sufficient reason for our refusing to admit it as a portion of what God in His word teaches us concerning them, and of what therefore it is incumbent upon us to believe.\*

\* *Vide* Calvin's *Antidote*; Heidegger's *Anatome*; Davenant; Downname on *Justification*.

While, then, the Church of Rome holds the great scriptural principle, that Adam, by his fall, forfeited the favour of God, and holiness of nature not only for himself but for his posterity, and transmitted sin and death to the whole human race, she has not only erred by defect, in wrapping up this great truth in vague and general terms, and giving no clear and definite explanation of the nature and constituent elements of the sinfulness of the condition into which man fell; but she has also incurred the guilt of teaching one decided and important error,—in asserting that, in baptism or regeneration, everything that is properly sinful is removed or taken away; and that concupiscence in the regenerate is not sin, though repeatedly called so by an inspired apostle. We would now only observe (for it is scarcely worth while to notice the declaration of the council in the end of their decree about original sin, that it was not their intention to comprehend in it the Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary, the mother of God), that the Church of Rome has further provided, by other doctrines which she inculcates, for neutralizing practically all the scriptural truth which she teaches concerning the fall of man and its consequences. By teaching the invariable connection between the due administration of the ordinance of baptism, and the entire removal of guilt and depravity of nature, she has practically removed from men's minds, at least in countries where a profession of Christianity is established,—and where, in consequence, most persons are baptized in infancy,—all sense and impression of their true condition, responsibility, and danger as fallen creatures, who have become subject to the curse of a broken law. It is true, indeed, that men all come into the world involved in sin; but then, in professedly Christian countries, they are almost all baptized in infancy; and this, according to the Church of Rome, certainly frees them at once, and as a matter of course, from all guilt and depravity. No baptized person, according to the Popish doctrine, has any further process of regeneration to undergo, any renovation to be effected upon his moral nature. All that was necessary in this respect has been accomplished in his baptism, wherein, as the semi-Popish Catechism of the Church of England hath it, "he was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." Men may still, indeed, incur guilt by actual transgressions of God's law, but the Church of Rome has provided for their comfort the sacrament of penance, another

external ordinance by which this guilt is taken away; and it is comforting also to be assured, that, in their endeavours to preserve what is called their baptismal purity from the stain of actual transgressions, they have no corruption or depravity of nature to struggle with. The practical effect of this teaching is to lead men to make no account whatever of their being involved in original sin, as including both guilt and depravity, so far as concerns any state of mind which they are at any time called upon to cherish, or any duty which they can be called upon to discharge; for what difference will it make practically upon the views, feelings, and impressions of the great mass of mankind, whether they are told that they have no original sin, or that, though they have, it was all certainly and conclusively washed away when they were baptized in their infancy? The practical effect upon the minds of Papists must be substantially the same as if they had been educated in Pelagian or Socinian principles, or in the entire disbelief of original sin; *i.e.*, they will have the impression, even if they should be led to turn their thoughts to religious subjects when they come to years of understanding, and before they have been led into the commission of grosser sins, that they have just to start upon the work of effecting all that is now needful for their own salvation, by preserving a decent conformity to outward requirements, whether ordinances or moral duties, while they have no depravity of nature, which must first of all have its power broken,—still be continually struggled against. Scriptural views of the effects of the fall, and of the actual condition of man as fallen, firmly held and fully applied, are fitted to exert a most wholesome influence upon men's whole conceptions of the way of salvation, and their whole impressions of divine things, and, indeed, are indispensable as a means to this end; but the Church of Rome holds the truth upon this important subject, so far as she holds it, in unrighteousness, admitting it in words, but denying it in reality,—admitting it into her system only for the purpose of making men dependent for its removal upon the priest, by the administration of an outward rite, that they may thus be constrained into submission to his authority, but for any other practical purposes rejecting or denying it. It is a striking illustration of the injurious and dangerous tendency of the notion that guilt and depravity are taken away in baptism, that in Romish theology,—and this is true, from the same cause, to a large extent, of the theology of the

Church of England,—the important scriptural doctrine of regeneration, or of a real renovation of men's moral nature by the operation of the Holy Ghost, through the belief of the truth, is seldom if ever mentioned, but is quietly assumed to be wholly unnecessary; because men have been baptized in their infancy, and have thereby been certainly put in possession of everything that is necessary, except their own outward obedience to God's commandments, for their deliverance from all danger, and their admission into heaven.

*Sec. VI.—Sinfulness of Works before Regeneration.*

I have had occasion to mention that, at the time of the Reformation, the disputes between the Reformers and the Romanists under the head of original sin, turned, not so much upon the proper nature or definition of the thing itself, or the exposition of its constituent elements, but rather upon its practical bearing on the subjects of free-will, grace, and merit,—topics with which it certainly has, upon any view, a very intimate connection. Luther and his immediate followers were chiefly concerned about bringing out fully the true doctrine of Scripture as to the way in which a sinner is saved from guilt, depravity, and ruin, and clearing this doctrine from the corruptions with which it had been obscured and perverted in the teaching that prevailed generally in the Church of Rome. The great obstacles they had to encounter in this work, were to be found in the notions that generally obtained with respect to human ability and human merit. The substance of what was then commonly believed upon these points, speaking generally, and not entering at present into anything like detail, was this: First, that men, notwithstanding their fallen condition, have still remaining some natural power by which they can prepare and dispose themselves for receiving divine grace, and even, in a certain sense, do something to merit that grace of God, by which alone their deliverance can be effected; and, secondly, that after the grace of God has been bestowed upon them, and has produced its primary and fundamental effects, they are then in a condition in which they have it in their power to merit from God, in a higher and stricter sense, increase of grace and eternal life. These notions had been inculcated by many of the schoolmen, and prevailed generally, almost universally, in the Church of

Rome at the period of the Reformation. It is certain that they were almost universally entertained by the instructors of the people at the time when Luther began his public labours as a Reformer; and it is manifest that they must have very materially influenced men's whole conceptions as to what man by nature is, as to what he can do for his own deliverance, and as to the way in which that deliverance is actually effected.

Now, the great work for which God raised up Luther, and which He qualified and enabled him to accomplish, was just to overturn these notions of human ability and human merit, with the foundation on which they rested, and the whole superstructure that was based upon them. These notions implied, or were deduced from, certain views as to the actual condition of human nature, as possessed by men when they come into the world; while the great practical result of them was to divide the accomplishment of men's salvation between the grace of God and the efforts and achievements of men themselves. It was chiefly in this way that the subject of original sin came to occupy a place in the controversy between the Reformers and the Church of Rome; while these considerations, combined with the fact formerly adverted to,—viz., that the Church of Rome was so tied up by the authority of Augustine, and by the decisions of the early church in the Pelagian and semi-Pelagian controversies of the fifth and sixth centuries, that she could not, without belying all her principles, deviate very far from scriptural views upon original sin, at least in formal profession,—also explain the result already referred to, viz., that the discussions which then took place connected with original sin, turned mainly upon the bearing of the actual, existing moral condition of man as he comes into the world, upon free-will, grace, and merit. The Reformers, instead of labouring to prove that all Adam's posterity were involved in the guilt and penal consequences of his first transgression, and that he transmitted sin and death to all his descendants,—positions which, in some sense, and as expressed thus generally, the Romanists usually did not dispute,—were mainly concerned about certain practical conclusions which they thought deducible from them, and which, when once established, virtually overturned the whole foundations of the views that generally prevailed in the Church of Rome, as to the way of a sinner's salvation. These practical conclusions were mainly two,—viz., first, that men, until they have become

the subjects of God's special grace through Christ in regeneration, are altogether sinful, or have nothing whatever in them or about them but what is sinful; and, secondly, that even after they have become the subjects of God's justifying and renewing grace, there is still something sinful, and in itself deserving of punishment, about all that they are and all that they do, about every feature of their character, and every department of their conduct. These are strong and sweeping positions. It is evidently a matter of great importance to ascertain whether they are true or not;—for, if true, they are manifestly fitted to exert a most important influence, both theoretically and practically,—*i.e.*, both in regulating men's conceptions of the way in which a sinner's salvation is and must be effected, and in regulating the personal feelings and impressions of those whose minds are at all concerned about their spiritual welfare. On this account it may be proper to devote some observations to the explanation and illustration of these most important positions, which were maintained by all the Reformers, and have been generally adopted by the Protestant churches. Luther, indeed, in explaining and defending them, made use occasionally of some rash and exaggerated expressions, which afforded a plausible handle for cavilling to Popish controversialists. But the positions, in substance, as we have stated them, were generally adopted by the Reformers, and had a place assigned to them in most of the Reformed Confessions. The Council of Trent condemned them both, well knowing that the maintenance of them proved an insuperable obstacle to any very material corruption of the gospel of the grace of God, and that, when intelligently and cordially received, they had a most powerful tendency to preserve men in a state of thought and feeling, in regard to the way of a sinner's salvation, very different from that which the Church of Rome inculcated and encouraged.

The first position is, that until men individually become the subjects of God's special grace,—*i.e.*, until God's grace is actually communicated to them in their justification and regeneration,—there is nothing in them or about them but what is sinful, and deserving of God's displeasure. Now, this is virtually the same thing as saying that man's actual moral nature as he comes into the world is wholly and not partially depraved; that he does not possess any tendency or inclination to what is truly good, but only to what is evil or sinful; that out of the mere exercise of his

natural powers, the mere operation of the natural principles of his moral constitution, viewed apart from the special grace conferred upon him, nothing really good does or can come, nothing that either is in itself, or is fitted to produce, what is really in accordance with the requirements of God's law,—or, what is in substance the same thing, that all the actions of unregenerate men are wholly sinful. The Church of Rome admits\* that a man cannot be justified before God by his own works, done by the powers of nature, and without the grace of Christ, and that he cannot, without the preventing (*præveniens*) inspiration and assistance of the Holy Spirit, believe, hope, love, and repent as is necessary in order that the grace of justification may be conferred upon him; but then the Council of Trent, while maintaining these doctrines, denounced an anathema against those who held † “that all works which are done before justification” (justification, it must be remembered, comprehends, in Romish theology, regeneration, and indeed the whole of what is usually classed by Protestant divines under the general head of the application of the blessings of redemption), “in whatever way they may be done, are truly sins, and deserve the displeasure of God, and that the more anxiously any man strives to dispose or prepare himself for grace, he only sins the more grievously.”

This canon affords a good illustration of an observation formerly made in the general review of the proceedings of the council. The whole substance of the Protestant doctrine which the council intended to anathematize, is set forth in the first part of the canon; and the latter part of what is included in the same anathema, about a man only sinning the more grievously the more he strives to prepare himself for grace, is merely a somewhat strong and incautious statement of Luther's,—containing, indeed, what is true in substance, but forming no part of the main doctrine, and needing, perhaps, to be somewhat explained and modified. Luther, of course, in making this statement, was describing the case of a man who was laboriously going about to establish his

\* Can. Trid., Session vi., can. i. and iii. | esse peccata, vel odium Dei mereri, aut, quanto vehementius quis nititur se disponere ad gratiam, tanto eum gravius peccare; anathema sit.

own righteousness, who, having been somewhat impressed with the importance of salvation, was anxiously seeking to procure God's favour and the grace of justification by deeds of law; and the substance of what he meant to teach upon this subject—though he may have sometimes expressed it strongly and incautiously—was this, that a man who was acting out so thoroughly erroneous views of the way of a sinner's salvation, was even, by the very success which might attend his efforts, only exposing his eternal welfare to the more imminent danger, inasmuch as any success he might have in this process had a powerful tendency to lead him to stop short of what was indispensable to his salvation,—a statement which is fully warranted both by Scripture and experience. But as the statement, when nakedly put without explanation, had a paradoxical and somewhat repulsive aspect, the council did not think it beneath them to introduce it into their anathema, in order to excite a prejudice against the main doctrine which they intended to condemn. This doctrine itself,—viz., that all works done before justification, or by unregenerate men, are truly sins, and deserve God's displeasure,—with the practical conclusion which is involved in it,—viz., that nothing done by men before they are justified and regenerated by God's grace, can possibly merit or deserve in any sense, however limited, the favour of God, or even exert any favourable influence in the way, either of calling forth any gracious exercise of God's power, or of preparing men for the reception of it,—was maintained by all the Reformers, and was established by them on satisfactory scriptural evidence. Calvin has a chapter\* to prove, and he does prove, that “*ex corrupta hominis natura nihil nisi damnabile prodire,*” —meaning by *damnabile*, what deserves condemnation,—and, of course, intending to teach, that so far from there being anything about men, resulting merely from their natural principles, and antecedently to their regeneration by the gracious power of God, which can merit justification, or even prepare them for the reception of it, there is, on the contrary, nothing about them, and nothing that they either do or can do, but what is of such a character and tendency as to afford sufficient ground for subjecting them to the sentence which the law of God denounces against transgression. The same doctrine is taught explicitly in the

\* Instit., Lib. ii., c. iii.

thirteenth article of the Church of England:—Art. XIII. Of Works before Justification: “Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of His Spirit, are not pleasant to God; forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the school authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but that they have the nature of sin.” The same doctrine is thus set forth, in connection with the principal grounds on which it rests, with admirable fulness, propriety, and precision in our own Confession:—“Works done by unregenerate men, although, for the matter of them, they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others” (such, for instance, as giving money for the relief of the poor or the spread of the gospel); “yet, because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to the word; nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God. And yet their neglect of them is more sinful, and displeasing unto God.”

Protestants have always maintained that their doctrine upon this subject is clearly contained in, and necessarily deducible from, the general representations which Scripture gives us of the moral character and condition of men as they come into the world, and is established also by scriptural declarations bearing very directly and explicitly upon the point in dispute. The Papists, in order to maintain their position that all works done before justification are not sins, are obliged to assert that the corruption or depravity of human nature is not total, but only partial, and that man did not wholly, but only in part, lose the image of God by the fall. Everything in Scripture which proves the complete or total corruption of man's moral nature,—which shows that he is, as our Confession says,† “utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil,”—equally proves, that until God's gracious power is put forth to renew him, all his actions are only and wholly sinful. If the corruption is total and complete, as the Scripture represents it, then there is nothing in man, until he be quickened and renewed, which either

\* West. Con., C. xvi., sec. vii.

† C. vi., sec. iv.

is good, or can of itself produce or elicit anything good. Our Saviour has said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" and in saying so He has laid down a great principle, which, viewed in connection with what can be shown to be the ordinary meaning of "the flesh" in Scripture, just amounts in substance to this, that corrupt human nature, as it is and by itself, can produce nothing but what is corrupt; and He asserted the same general principle with equal clearness, though in figurative language, when He said, "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit."

The statement of the apostle\* is very strong and explicit: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." There can be no reasonable doubt about the meaning of the word "flesh,"—no reasonable doubt that it means not only the body with its appetites, but *the whole man*, with all his faculties and tendencies, in his natural or unrenewed condition; and if so, the apostle here explicitly asserts of himself, and, in himself, of every other partaker of human nature, that antecedently to, and apart from, the regenerating grace of God changing his nature, there was no good thing in him, and that, of course, there could no good thing come out of him. The same doctrine is also explicitly taught by the same apostle when he says,† "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." And again:‡ "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." These statements are plainly intended to describe the natural state or condition of men, antecedently to the operations of divine grace upon their understandings and hearts, with respect to their power or capacity of knowing, loving, obeying, and pleasing God, and actually doing so; in short, with respect to their doing anything good, or discharging any duty which He requires, or effecting anything that may really avail for their deliverance and salvation; and the description plainly and explicitly given of men's condition is this, that men are actually destitute of any such power or capacity,—that they do, and can do, nothing to realize these results.

Men are very apt, when they read such statements in the

\* Rom. vii. 18.

† Rom. viii. 7, 8.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

word of God, to act upon some vague impression that they are not to be taken literally, but that they must be understood with some qualifications,—that they should in some way or other be explained away. But a vague impression of this sort is wholly unreasonable. When the words are once proved or admitted to be a part of God's recorded testimony, our only business is to ascertain what is really their meaning. If any limitation is to be put upon the natural proper meaning of the words, the grounds and reasons of the proposed limitation must be distinctly specified and defined, and must be clearly apprehended by the understanding. And the only source from which a valid or legitimate limitation of their import can be derived is the word of God itself; *i.e.*, materials must be produced from the context, or from other portions of the sacred Scriptures, to prove that they are not to be taken in all the latitude of their natural proper meaning, and to mark out to what extent the limitation is to be carried. God says that in us, that is, in our flesh or natural character,—in the whole of man in his unrenewed state,—there dwelleth no good thing. If this statement is not to be taken in its proper literal meaning; in other words, if it is to be maintained,—and this is virtually the position taken by the Romanists, and all others who either deny or in any measure explain away the total and complete depravity of human nature,—that in our flesh or natural character there *does* dwell some good thing, then it is plainly incumbent upon those who take this ground, to produce explicit and satisfactory proof from Scripture that there is some good thing in fallen and unrenewed men; and that, of course, this being established, the apostle's statement is to be taken with some limitation; or else they justly expose themselves to the woe denounced against men who call evil good.

Romanists, and others who adopt similar views upon this subject, usually content themselves with the general statement, that the corruption or depravity of human nature is not total, but only partial; endeavouring to defend this general position by bringing out what they allege it is necessary for men to have, in order to their being responsible, without in general attempting to define how far the corruption goes and where it stops, or to mark out what there is of good that still characterizes fallen and unrenewed men. They do not usually dispute absolutely, or as a general position, that man by his fall forfeited and lost the image of God;