

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

NUMBER IV.

1848.
MARCH, 1847.

ARTICLE I.

LECTURES ON FOREIGN CHURCHES, *delivered in Edinburgh and Glasgow, May, 1845, in connection with the objects of the Free Church of Scotland.* FIRST SERIES. *Edinburgh, 1845.*

LECTURES ON FOREIGN CHURCHES. SECOND SERIES. *Edinburgh, 1846.*

The first series of these lectures is by the Rev. Drs. Candlish, Wilson, and McFarlane; and the Rev. Messrs. Thomas McCrie, Robert W. Stewart, Wm. K. Tweedie, and J. G. Lorimer.

The subjects are as follows:

- I. The Mutual Relations of the Churches of Christ.
- II. The Independent Eastern Churches.
- III. The Ancient History of the Waldensian Church.
- IV. The present condition and future prospects of the Waldensian Church.
- V. The Religious History of Holland and Belgium since the Reformation.
- VI. Past and Present State of Evangelical Religion in Switzerland, and especially Geneva.
- VII. The Past and Present State of Evangelical Religion in France.

The *Second Series*, contains seven lectures by Messrs. Wilson, Forbes, Fairbairn, Bryce, Tweedie, Hetherington, and Buchanan. Their subjects are:

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There are but few modern missionaries who cannot testify to the existence of forms of human depravity among the heathen of the present day, of which there is no mention in the Apostle's category, and of which perhaps there was no existence in his day. And is it unnatural or improbable, that such should be the case? Can it be supposed that the heathen world has not been made worse, by the unrestrained, unqualified workings of *heathenism*, for eighteen centuries? What is modern heathenism, but human depravity embodied, and tottering with old age. But let it be borne in mind, that although it may appear to us to be decrepid with age, and on the borders of dissolution, this is only a disguise. Yea, it is operating at the present moment, with undiminished energy. The depth of infamy and pollution to which heathen tribes have already reduced themselves, can scarcely be conceived. To what they are yet to attain, if not wrested from the powers of darkness, God only knows. When we reflect upon their deep degradation, their vices, their crimes, and their excesses, we cease to wonder that they are beginning to disappear from the face of the earth. We see in their gradual extinction, the fulfilment of Divine threatenings—the hand of exhausted forbearance—the operation of natural laws, in cause and effect.

But all this accumulated guilt of the heathen, and this fearful depopulation in their ranks, are chargeable to the neglect of those who ought to have sent them the Gospel. We have in our hands the means of arresting these disastrous evils, but we have not applied it. Every day the work is put off, but renders it the more difficult to be performed. What, therefore, we would do, let us do without delay.

ARTICLE IV.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE DOCTRINE OF IMPUTED SIN.

No fact is capable of stricter proof than the universal existence of sin. The uniform testimony of conscience, the various expiatory rites which enter into every system of

worship among men, the stringent restraints of human law, the universal prevalence of suffering and death in their almost endless diversity of forms, and the direct testimony of the Bible—are all separate, but certain, lines of evidence. From whatever point in the circle of inquiry we start, by one or other of these radii we are conducted to the great central fact that man is a sinner: always and everywhere, in all changes of time, place and circumstance, it is an ever-present characteristic of him that he sins. But the induction stops not here: this truth reached, we press behind it and generalize a more sweeping and startling conclusion, that this universality of sin is due to a sinful nature lying behind the act and prompting it—which nature every human being brings with him into existence. The proof of this latter position is exceedingly short to those who bow with reverence before the authority of Scripture: “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” To those, however, who are presumptuous enough to decline this inspired testimony, we affirm that upon principles of sound philosophy, a rigid induction of particular facts will lead the inquirer to the same result. For if we regard sin merely as one of the phenomena which we observe in the world around us, like any other effect, it must be assigned to an adequate cause. If the effect be universal, the cause likewise must be all-pervading and universal: and no universal cause, at all satisfactory, can be named other than a sinful nature, whose necessary development, under all conceivable circumstances, must be sin and only sin. Thus even philosophy brings us upon the grand division of sin made by theologians into actual, and original. These terms define themselves: the former embraces all transgressions of the law of God, both of omission and commission, whether of thought, word or deed: the latter is the sin of our nature, which we bring with us from our own original, and is itself the origin of all our actual offences.

The reader stands now upon the threshold of the gravest inquiry which can possibly engage his thoughts: how come all men into the possession of this depraved nature, by virtue of which they are sinners from their very birth? Does sin form an essential part of the original constitution of this world? Is this sinful nature the immediate product

of the Deity, resulting from his active efficiency? Is man a sinner because God made him such? Surely it were frantic blasphemy to say so: all the perfections of God—his wisdom, his goodness, his power, his holiness—are impeached by the supposition. The only remaining hypothesis philosophy cannot clothe in better language than this of Scripture: "God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." The same process of reasoning, which leads to the inference of a universal deluge in the material world, would establish the inference of a convulsion just as great in the moral. Geologists observe the continuity of the earth's surface frequently interrupted; they discover shells and the bones of marine animals upon mountain tops where they could never be except by transportation; they observe valleys and deep ravines where, judging from the stratification of the earth and the configuration of adjacent hills, the surface was once uniform and level: facts numerous and strong enough to infer some mighty shock of nature occasioning these irregularities. When, therefore, the most ancient records detail the account of a universal deluge, sound philosophy simply requires that the phenomena shall be compared with this fact, and the latter proved adequate to occasion the former, in order to settle the creed of geology upon these points forever. Thus in the case before us: it being certain from the divine perfections, and from the plain testimony of Scripture, that God made man holy and in his own image, the universal corruption of the race can only be explained upon the supposition of some mighty and dismal shock which has shattered the human nature into the ruin we now behold. When, therefore, the Scriptures reveal the sin of the first man, we find in his dreadful apostasy that moral convulsion which has thrown his unhappy race, broken and blasted, under the avenging wrath of Heaven. The competency of this one sin to draw after it this awful consequence—as the immortal Milton sings,

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

will appear in the progress of this article; thus fulfilling

the last requirement even of an exacting and sceptical philosophy.

Thus far every mode of inquiry we adopt leads to the same conclusion : if, with a teachable faith, we abide by the testimony of Scripture, this instructs us, that "by one man sin entered into the world:" if with a bolder spirit we throw ourselves upon the inductive process, the last generalization places us upon the same platform. We have however reached at last a point where philosophy must extinguish her torch, and sit with a veiled face before the oracles of God, meekly learning what she cannot discover. How is it that the fall of Adam passes a sinful nature down to his posterity, a bitter and inalienable inheritance? The final reply—which exhausts all inquiry—is furnished from the Scriptures. Let the reader fix his eye upon the fifth chapter of Romans, and he learns that the first offence of the first man is reckoned to his race: ἄρα οὖν ὡς δι' ἑνὸς παραπτώματος, εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους, εἰς κατάχρημα, &c. "As by the offence of one, (or it may read, as through one offence,) judgment came upon all men to condemnation." A reason then is here assigned, which goes to the roots of the case. Sin exists universally, because all have a sinful nature : and a sinful nature is possessed by all, because by the established ordinance of God, Adam's one offence was the offence of all : all men, therefore, together with the great representative offender, were brought under divine wrath, which of necessity separated them at once from holiness. As in a remoter stage of our inquiry we fell upon the theological distinction of actual and original sin, so now we are brought into one more acute and subtle, the distinction made by divines between original sin imputed, and original sin inherent : the first consisting of this imputation of Adam's sin ; and the second, of that sinful nature which is the consequent of this imputation. This distinction is clearly drawn in the familiar language of the catechism, which we quote as far as necessary : "The sinfulness of that estate wherinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature ; which is commonly called original sin," &c. Here are presented, and in their natural order, the two integral parts of original sin ; the first term indicating it as imputed,

the third term indicating it as inherent, while the middle term, as a vinculum, connects the two, and exhibits the one as resulting from the other.

Placing the reader upon the outermost circumference of this inquiry, he finds himself wound within the circle, and drawn by each generalization nearer to the centre. All investigation terminates upon this fixed and final fact, unresolvable by further analysis, of imputation. The whole account of sin hinges here: by a particular constitution, (into the nature of which we shall have occasion soon to enter,) Adam's sin was the sin of his posterity: and the reckoning of it to them lies behind all explanation, as the *ultima ratio* of the corruption of man's whole nature. If, then, we invite the reader to a special consideration of this, it is not an idle speculation, a mere balancing of straws, to which he is referred. This doctrine of imputation is the only key fitted to the wards of that difficult, and otherwise locked question, the existence of sin. It affords the only true solution of man's present state; and thus becomes alike interesting to the curious, who wish merely to penetrate the secret of their condition, and to the pious, who would know in order to be released. This doctrine lies equally at the foundation of the whole scheme of redemption revealed in the Gospel: the mystery of which is opened to us in the words, "he was made sin for us." The sins of all the elect were imputed to Christ, and thus he bore the penalty for them: in like manner, all his "obedience unto death," was reckoned to them, so that there is no condemnation. The whole justification of the believer is unrolled from this double or reciprocal imputation, on the one hand of their sins to Christ, and on the other hand of Christ's righteousness to them. Both are conducted upon the same eternal principles of justice and of law; and both find their complete illustration in the reckoning of Adam's sin to his natural seed. To inquire here, then, puts us in possession of a principle which will lead us down to the granite foundations of a saved sinner's hope.

It will be our aim now to show that the cause of our condemnation and the cause of our depravity, is that single offence of Adam, committed by him in eating the forbidden fruit, and which becomes ours by a strict and proper legal imputation. The first proof of this will be drawn from the

fact that God entered into a special covenant with Adam, in which he was appointed the representative and head of his posterity. If this compact shall be established, the inference of the imputation of Adam's sin will appear but as the inevitable result of the whole constitution. It will be needful to elaborate this point, for two reasons: first, because being most usually assumed by Calvinistic writers as an admitted truth, many persons, who have not access to works in which this subject is systematically treated, have found themselves perplexed in drawing out the proof: and, secondly, because it is denied by gainsayers in so challenging a tone. Whitby, for example, inter alios, in his treatise upon election and reprobation, denounces the doctrine of Adam's Federal relation thus: * "The Holy Scripture is perfectly silent in every part and tittle of this *school divinity*; it hath not one word of this free decree, or this dismal compact with Adam, or I know not who; not one iota of our propagation from the loins of Adam more than from the womb of our mother Eve, the 'mother of all living;' or that he bore the person of all mankind more than she bore the person of all womankind; or of any decree, that Adam's posterity should be charged with the guilt of any sin personally committed by him, rather than the woman with the sin of Eve; or that they should be charged only with his first, not with his following transgressions; or, that his guilt should be imputed to them, rather than his repentance." In like manner, discoursing in another treatise upon the imputation of Christ's righteousness, he says: † "This proposition is founded upon a chimerical covenant between God the Father and the Son, of which there is not the least item in the Holy Scriptures; so that the whole scheme of this doctrine, being built upon this vain imagination, must be also vain." This bold language, striking at the whole doctrine of the covenants, held by one justly considered 'primus inter primores' of the Arminian school, makes up as fair an issue as we can desire, and justifies on our part a close scrutiny of this point. The question is one simply of fact: was Adam made the federal representative of the human race by

* Discourses upon the Five Points, p. 72.

† Patrick, Lowth, &c. Commentary on the Scriptures, new edition, vol. 4th, p. 669.

the special constitution of God himself? Two dilemmas will exhaust the suppositions which are possible in the case: the arrangement made with Adam was either a dispensation merely of law, or it was of the nature of a free compact: if the latter, then it was formed with Adam as a single and private person simply, or with him as a public and responsible trustee, acting for others beside himself. We will attend to these in the order named. As to the first, it is promptly admitted that Adam was under a dispensation of law: as a moral being, he could not be otherwise than subject to a rule which should not only be the guide of his conduct, but also the test and regulator of his nature. This law or rule lay over against those very faculties which constituted him a moral being, and gave occasion to their first exercise; and then as an unchanging standard stood up to them the perfect measure of obligation. This statement seems to us fully to meet the objection frequently raised against the Adamic covenant, that in Scripture it is so often termed a law. With great propriety it is so called; for Adam was a being necessarily under law: the first breath which he drew commenced that career of accountability, which could only be terminated by the annihilation of those powers which were requisite to his moral agency. What we contend for is, that it was not an arrangement *merely* of law; it was law, but law reduced to the form of covenant. We are greatly deceived if the reader is not made soon to perceive the distinct characteristics of both; as Dr. Ridgley truly distinguishes: * "let it be considered that the dispensation Adam was under had two ideas included in it, which are not opposite to or inconsistent with each other, namely, that of a law and a covenant. * * * * * And therefore the dispensation may justly take its denomination from one or the other idea; provided, when one is mentioned, the other be not excluded. If we call it a law, it was such a law as had a promise of superadded blessedness annexed to it: or if we, on the other hand, call it a covenant, it had, notwithstanding, the obligation of a law, since it was made with a subject who was bound, without his arbitrary choice in this matter, to fulfil the demands thereof."

* Body of Divinity, vol. 2, p. 85.

The first thing which strikes us, in reading the brief history given in Genesis ii : 16, 17, is the limitation of Adam's obedience to one single particular : " of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat ; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." Here nothing is said of a law of nature covering the whole area of man's responsibility : but a single precept is given—obedience enjoined only upon one point. Are we then rashly to conclude, as some have done, that Adam knew no other command than this ? that there was no law of nature separate from this, which as a moral being he must recognize ? Most surely not : the moment Adam was created, he sustained, as a moral being, definite moral relations to God, and these were summed and represented in an immutable moral law. As already argued, we cannot separate a perfect law from the fact of moral agency, because without that there could be no exercise of this. To deny the existence of a natural law, which should express to Adam all his moral relations, and be the exact measure of his accountability, is simply to deny that he was a moral being. If then, from the instant of his creation, Adam was subject to that unchangeable moral law, under which we his descendants lie, what use was this superadded precept designed to serve, and what relation, if any, did it sustain to the preëxisting law of nature ? Upon the hypothesis that the Adamic dispensation was one of simple law, these questions will not soon be answered. All that was necessary to such a dispensation, was the endowment of man with moral faculties, and the discovery to him of an adequate moral law : and by the term adequate, we mean a law whose precepts and whose sanctions shall be coextensive with the whole nature it is designed to regulate. Under a strict legal dispensation, moreover, the probation of man would be unlimited. The law simply tells him his duty, and states clearly the hazard of disobedience. As there can be no discharge from the obligation to obey, the law must continue to lay its injunctions without a limit upon the conscience, and obedience is always rendered within view of the penalty. Whatever then puts a limitation to man's probation, shutting it up within a definite period, must be aside from the province of law, and come by virtue of a special arrangement. Now, we ask what important use could this positive command serve to

Adam, considering him as exclusively under the jurisdiction of God's law? Is it answered that in this one prohibition the whole moral law was summed up and thus given to Adam in the briefest compass? * Very true: but what occasion is there for this short-hand edition of the law? The entire code, touching upon every point of his accountability and engraved upon his nature, could be known as easily and be as well comprehended as this condensed precept itself. Is it further urged, that this precept was designed as the memorial of God's supremacy, since obedience is enjoined in what is in itself wholly indifferent? or simply as a memento of man's emptiness and want until furnished with gifts by the author of all good? Collaterally, indeed, it may answer this purpose: in the beautiful language of Boston, "this forbidden tree was a sign of emptiness, hung before the door of the creation, with this inscription, 'this is not your rest.'" Yet, surely there is no need of a special institute to teach the very lesson which is conveyed by the law of nature itself, the supremacy of God and the insufficiency of the creature.

But let us suppose now that God wishes to place man upon a limited probation, and to make all its conditions favorable to him; he must make a special arrangement to this end. He says to Adam, at present all your blessings are conditional, and the law does not provide but that they shall be so perpetually. In my benevolence, I will now assign a period to your probation: at the expiration of a given time, if you remain steadfast in your loyalty, all these blessings shall be secured to you without the contingency arising from conditions: and to facilitate your accomplishment of this probation, I make this single prohibition the exponent of my authority: I compress the whole law within it: all your energies are to be concentrated upon it; all the temptations to which you shall be subject, shall be confined to it; and this shall be recognized in our compact as the test of your loyalty and love. In this case now, the superadded precept answers a specific purpose. It does not supersede

* See Boston's Four Fold State, p. 87, edition of the Board. Also the Marrow of Modern Divinity, part 1, chap. 1, in both which it is shown how all the ten commandments were broken at once in the breach of this command.

the law of nature, nor does it eke out its moral teachings; but it is the acknowledged test of man's obedience and subjection. This argument we do not offer as *positively concluding* the existence of a covenant between God and man: for the test might have a place even under the law, and man might be subjected to it through an indefinite probation. But the fact that it answers no important end under such a dispensation, and that it fills so important an office under a covenant, as to seem even necessary to it, affords at least a strong *presumption* in favor of the latter. The limitation and facilitation of man's probation, must certainly be provided for by a special arrangement, since they both lie without the province of simple law.

Again, we argue the federal nature of this dispensation from the fact that we find in it all the parts of a covenant. It has indeed been objected that the word covenant is not applied to this transaction in the history given of it. To this, a fit reply has been furnished by the author* of the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*:† “God does not tie men to verbal expressions, but doth often contract the covenant in real impressions in the heart and frame of the creature: and this was the manner of covenanting with man at the first.” Boston also silences the objection, by showing that on the same ground we may‡ “deny the doctrine of the Trinity and sacraments, because those words do not occur where these things are treated of in Scripture, nay, are not to be found in the Scripture at all.” We may add, that just as reasonably might we conclude that Adam was not placed even under a law, because this term is not employed in the immediate narrative. But if we discover all the constituent parts of a law and a covenant, the mere absence of the technical designation is wholly immaterial. Can we then draw out from the history all the elements which make up the essence of a covenant? These elements are, separate parties acting freely—mutual stipulations between them—and seals ratifying the instrument, so that it may be pleaded in law.

In this enumeration, the threatening of death is not in-

* Said to be one Edward Fisher, who wrote about 1644. See M'Kerrow's *History of the Secession Church*, vol. 1, p. 14.

† *Marrow of Divinity*, part 1, chap. 1.

‡ *Boston on the Covenants*, vol. 2, p. 16.

cluded: not, however, because we do not regard this as being actually the sanction of the Adamic covenant, but because we now confine the reader's attention to those characteristics of a covenant which distinguish it from law. Boston seems to regard the sanction of death as peculiar to the covenant. He says: * "God put to the natural law a promise of eternal life and a threatening of death, and so it became a covenant of works." This language is ambiguous: if it implies simply that God incorporated the sanction of the law, so that it became also the sanction of the covenant, this would be exactly our own view. But if it means, that the threatening had no existence at all until the covenant was formed, so as to be one of *its* distinguishing properties, we must demur. The latter opinion, he seems to state without ambiguity, in his notes upon the Marrow: † "indeed he (the author of the Marrow) is not of opinion that a penal sanction is inseparable from the law of nature; that would put the glorified saints and confirmed angels in heaven—to say nothing more—under a penal sanction too; * * * * * *there is no place for a penal sanction where there is no possibility of transgression.*" With all our deference for the godly men who bore such an honourable testimony for the truth in an age of corruption and strife, we must be allowed to enter a dissent from this proposition. We cannot see but that the separation of a penal sanction from the law of nature sinks the latter into a mere institute. We have been accustomed to regard the two essential elements of law as being direction and obligation; and that while the first is expressed in the precept, the second is embodied in the penalty. To this statement, in the main, Boston and the Marrow men would readily assent, as may be seen from their answers to the third and fourth queries propounded by the Commission of the General Assembly. Yet, they evidently consider this obligation, ‡ "resulting from the nature of God and of the creature, and being eternal and immutable," as not requiring any formal embodiment in the law itself. To us, on the contrary, it seems that this obligation must have a formal expression in

* Boston on the Covenants, vol. 2, p. 32.

† Marrow of Modern Divinity, part 1, chap. 3.

‡ Answer to query 4th of the Commission.

the law, and that it is embodied in the penal sanction: so that to suppress this, would be to separate obligation from law, to destroy its formal nature, and to degrade it into mere advisory counsel. Besides, in our judgment, the Marrow men seem not to distinguish between the penalty, as it simply lies in the law the exponent of the lawgiver's authority, and as it is drawn forth in active exercise upon the offender: for in their answer to query 3d. of the Commission, they say: "as for the other consequent act of the law, to curse and to punish, this is but an accidental act, not necessary to a law, for it comes in upon supposition of transgression." A being surely may be secured from the penalty, as in the case of glorified saints and confirmed angels, and still the penalty remain an essential element of the law he is under. Indeed, the very confirmation in question, is predicated in part upon the existence of a penalty: for the term confirmation is a relative term, and suggests the corresponding ideas of holiness and security. If the former of these stands related to the sin which might be committed, the latter should stand related to the peril which might be incurred. So far as the glorified saints are concerned, we do know that their security turns upon the very fact that Christ bore the penalty in their stead. *Their* confirmation, consequently, must include the idea of a penalty which has been satisfied. This last thought, too, suggests another and fatal objection to the view of the Marrow men above presented: which is, that if the penalty forms no integral part of the law of nature, the absolute necessity for an atonement in order to the pardon of sin disappears. We have been accustomed to build the proposition, "without the shedding of blood there is no remission," upon the very nature of God as a holy being, which imperatively requires the punishment of sin. But we are at a loss in making out this absolute and a priori necessity, unless it be written upon the face of that original law, which reveals the nature and perfections of God, as well as his particular relations to his creatures. Briefly, then, our own opinion is, that the whole law, consisting of precepts and penalty, was incorporated into the covenant: the precepts were condensed into one prohibition, and the penalty went into and formed the sanction of the covenant. We enlarge no further, because a

penalty is not of the essence of a covenant—if made between parties who are equal, it properly would have no place: but as one of these parties was a subject, it is proper that the same sanction should guard the covenant, which fenced the law; in order that man, while rejoicing in the benefits of God's condescension, might still remember his supremacy, and never forget to render the grateful tribute of a dependent being.

It is time now to return to the three characteristics already named, as differencing a covenant from a dispensation of law. We clearly have the two parties, God and the first man. But the difficulty is raised, that one of the parties could not possibly act freely. He was not only a subject to the other party, but that very law, under which he was placed, formed the substance of the covenant: how, under these circumstances, was he competent to form a treaty? This inquiry assumes a principle which is false in fact, and there lies the fallacy of the argument it seems to state; which is, that obligation destroys freedom. Why, this principle would render impossible all obedience of law: for no compliance with law is obedience, if it be not spontaneous and free: and yet it is of the very essence of law that it binds duty upon the conscience. The fact is, all Adam's obedience, so long as he continued holy, was free, because his nature was in such harmony with that of his Maker, that his choice could not be otherwise than in the channel of duty. The certainty of his obedience, arose from no constraint upon his will, bending it forcibly from its own direction, but from the polarity (if we may so speak) of the will itself, by which it swung in free motion towards the law which governed it. So in this case: Adam could not but agree to any compact which God should propose: for God could propose nothing inconsistent with his own holiness: and the nature of Adam beat so true to that, of his own motion he would choose all the terms of such a compact. We go therefore much beyond the difficulty raised above, when we affirm not only that *obligation* does not interfere with choice, but that even a strict *moral necessity* does not. Nay, if it were not for the digression, it could be shown that no other foundation exists for the liberty of a moral being but this very necessity which is supposed to

destroy it. Again, why should not Adam assent to the terms of this covenant? they are singularly liberal and advantageous. His probation, which under the law was indefinite and perpetual, is reduced within a given compass—all his present blessings, after that period, are to be enjoyed free from contingency and fear—all outward temptations, which under the law might be directed against every precept, are narrowed down and made to bear only upon one point—his attention and care are concentrated upon this only avenue of danger—and invaluable blessings, beyond any which now enrich him, are secured to him at the close of his probation. With his understanding clear and vigorous, what should hinder from appreciating these advantages and making them the objects of his choice? The certainty of Adam's assent to the covenant does not then, in any view of it, impair the freedom of his act.

The next element of a covenant is mutual stipulations between these parties. On the one hand, Adam pledged a most religious obedience to that particular positive command, which was set as the test of his acquiescence in the whole moral law: on the other hand, "God," in the language of Witsius,* "promised to Adam life eternal; that is, the most perfect fruition of himself, and that forever." That Adam did acquiesce in the prohibition to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge, is apparent from the shame and remorse which he evinced so soon as the command was violated; emotions which could have no place in his breast, did he not freely assent to that law as "holy, just and good." But it has already been shown that this command could have no place aside from the covenant of which it was the test, so that Adam's acquiescence must be viewed as a voluntary covenant stipulation. We gather the stipulation of the other party from the language of the penalty, "thou shalt surely die," which clearly implies a promise that, if he continued steadfast to the end, he should live. But here we meet a difficulty: as this threatening belonged to the law of nature before it became the sanction of the covenant, what more was secured to Adam by the covenant than by the law? The difference is this: the law secured life to man only so long as he obeyed, affording no guarantee for the obedience

* Witsius on the Covenants, vol. 1, p. 50.

itself: but the covenant secured to Adam, after he finished his trial, both obedience and life—the promise of the latter was a permanent life, secure from all risk of forfeiture. Divines differ as to what was included in this promise of life; some supposing that Adam would have been advanced to a much higher state of felicity than he enjoyed during his probation;—others restricting the blessing to the perpetuation of his original condition. Of the first class, we may adduce Witsius, who says: * “What kind of covenant would it have been to have added no reward to his obedience and his faithful compliance with the conditions of the covenant, but a continuation of those blessings which he actually enjoyed already, and which it was not becoming God to refuse to man whom he had created? * * * *

A greater therefore and more exalted felicity still awaited him,” &c. Of the second class, we may cite Dr. Williams, the celebrated Annotator upon the writings of President Edwards, who employs this language: † “Much has been said by some divines about the probability of Adam, had he kept the condition, being *promoted* to some situation still more exalted. But there is reason to suspect that such a sentiment proceeds on the supposition of Adam possessing a less exalted situation than he really did possess. The idea seems to be founded upon a probable promotion for continued obedience. But what could be a greater reward than a continuance of his chartered privileges.” We care not to adjust the difference between these writers. Both agree that a promise was made to Adam in the covenant greater than that made or implied in the law: on condition of obedience to one command for a given time, God stipulates to confirm him in holiness forever. This is enough for our purpose, because as it goes beyond the law, it must be a free covenant stipulation. The inquiry now turns upon the fact itself; did God make such a promise as this to Adam? In establishing this, we feel at liberty to gather evidence from any portion of the inspired word. In the whole Scriptures, there is a constant opposition between the law of works and the law of faith. But this opposition consists not so much in the blessing secured, as in the con-

* Witsius on the Covenants, vol. 1, p. 52.

† Note on p. 536 of Edwards' Works, vol. 2.

ditions of obtaining it. In both cases the same promise of life is made: "Moses describeth the righteousness of the law, that the man that doeth those things shall *live by them*;" the law of faith reads, "the just shall *live by faith*." Here there is a marked difference between *the means*: in the one case it is by *doing*; in the other case it is by *believing*; but in either, the end attained is *life*. Now, it is plain that the life which comes by the law of faith is eternal life, confirmation in holiness and the full fruition of God forever. Of course, if the life secured by the law of works is the same, the promise, which secures this permanent holiness, must come by a covenant, and not by the law which secures life only during an uncertain obedience. Furthermore, when the Apostle Paul, in his epistles both to the Romans and to the Galatians, insists upon the impossibility of justification by the law, the argument never turns upon the assertion that the law has no promise of complete justification; but simply, that through the weakness of the flesh, or our corrupt and fallen nature, we can no longer fulfil the conditions annexed to the promise. It is plain, therefore, that under the first dispensation, the promise of life made to Adam included the idea of his confirmation and safe enjoyment of God forever. But no such promise can belong to a merely legal dispensation: this then is a superadded blessing, and proves the existence of a covenant, in which this was a free stipulation of the Deity.*

The third element of a covenant is a ratifying seal, designed to give it legal force, as well as to guard against imposture and fraud. The form of the seal is immaterial, and depends simply upon conventional agreement. We will not enter upon the four sacraments which systematic writers sometimes assign to the covenant of works. Two of these, Paradise and the Sabbath, Adam would unquestionably have enjoyed under the law: the first, as the place of his abode; the second, because under the law, no less than under the covenant, he was bound to worship God. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, we have already considered as the prescribed test of Adam's obedience. So that the tree of life alone remains, having no place but in the covenant, and discharging no office to it other than of a

* Witsius on the Covenants, book 1, chap. 4, vol. 1, pp. 50, 51.

seal, giving validity to it as a legal instrument. We might judge this to be its office from the title given to it, the "tree of life:" for unless we fall back upon the puerile supposition that this tree possessed the physical property of bestowing immortality upon those who ate of it, we can see no reason for this designation, but its relation to the covenant. The covenant being a covenant of life, this tree, as its seal, might well be termed the tree of life. So long as Adam fulfilled his own stipulations, so long he enjoyed a right to this tree: but so soon as he should break the covenant, this right would be forfeited. This view is confirmed by the circumstance, that when Adam was driven forth from the garden after his fall, the reason assigned is, "lest he put forth his hand and take of the tree of life." The supposition of some that the fruit of this, if eaten, would have conferred immortality upon Adam, though a sinner, and thus would have prevented the curse of the broken covenant from reaching him, is both silly and wicked: and the suggestion of others, that God utters this language in bitter mockery is, to say the least, both unsatisfactory and harsh. But if this tree was the sacrament of the covenant, Adam by his sin forfeited all right to it: and to signify that he was debarred, God might both expel him from Eden and employ this language. Nay, so material was it that fallen Adam should not touch this tree, that angry cherubim, with flaming swords, guarded the way of approach to it: which cannot well be explained upon any other view, than that this tree was the seal of the covenant.

If then we clearly trace all the elements of a covenant in this transaction—contracting parties, reciprocal stipulations, and ratifying seals—we surely must adjudge that to exist of which these are the parts. And if we have shown Adam's probation to have been limited, and superadded blessings to have been connected with his obedience, a chain of proof is certainly made out that Adam was not under a dispensation of law merely. But we are committed to another task: if this was a true covenant formed with Adam, it is incumbent on us to show that it contemplated him as a public trustee, and not as a private and single individual, before we can infer any thing as to the doctrine of imputation.

We believe the Scriptures to teach that in this covenant

Adam was appointed the representative of his whole natural seed—that as a public person, their interests together with his own were committed to his keeping—that by virtue of this relation of moral or covenant head which he sustained to his posterity, he and they were constituted a legal unit, so that each covenant act of his was equally their covenant act—that his obedience, if he had rendered it, would have been theirs,—and of course his breach of the covenant was their breach of it, and his guilt was their guilt. All these expressions indeed are but modifications of the one general idea of federal headship: each will hold true, if Adam possessed in the covenant a strictly representative character. Now, as to this, it should be conclusive that no other hypothesis will solve the most observed and admitted facts connected with the present condition of the race. All men, without exception, commit actual sin; and all men have too a sinful nature, which is antecedent to the sinful act. How comes this to be? If Adam stood on trial for himself alone, the consequences of his sin should terminate upon himself. How come they to be visited on his posterity, if there be no legal identity between them by which they are involved with him in the same ruin? Some are satisfied with tracing this to the relation Adam sustained to them as a natural root, and plead here the operation of that physical law by which like begets its like. Adam, then, did not beget a holy race, because he was himself a sinner; upon the same principle that a lion does not beget a lamb, nor a tiger a kid. We shall soon have abundant opportunity to expose the baldness of this plea; in advance, however, we may denounce it as incompetent, since it leaves unexplained how moral qualities shall be transmitted by physical generation; and as impious, since it cannot be defended from the charge of making God the direct author of sin. But to return: if Adam was not the representative of his race in that covenant, then they have enjoyed no probation. He was put on trial, fell, and was condemned: but they begin precisely where he ended; they are born with that sinful nature, which he acquired by the fall; and they are subject to that death which was threatened against him as the sanction of the covenant. They evidently have had no trial, for they are in the same condition with one who has been condemned; unless in-

deed it be granted that their probation was representatively accomplished in Adam, which at once solves the entire problem.

Again, the federal relation of Adam may be argued from the fact, that in all the language addressed to him the race is clearly contemplated. The institution of marriage has not more reference to the first pair in Eden than to those whose union shall constitute the last family on earth—the injunction, “be fruitful and multiply,” contemplated the race then lying seminally in the loins of the great progenitor—the name Eve, given to the first mother, proves that Adam knew the tie which bound him to his posterity—the dominion given to Adam over the beasts of the field, though impaired by sin, is yet retained by his fallen offspring—the several curses denounced against Adam and against Eve are yet in force, painful memorials to all generations of men of their interest in the first transgression—the great promise of the woman’s seed, the fountain of all later promises, breaks not more fully upon the despair of the first, than of the last sinner saved. All these present accumulating proof that Adam, the race, stood before God in the person of Adam the man, the latter being the head and spring of the former.

But the prevailing evidence of Adam’s representative character is found in the close parallel instituted in Scripture between himself and Christ. Adam is expressly said, (Rom. v: 14,) to be the type or “figure of him that was to come,” that is, of Christ. In I. Cor. xv: 45, the two are distinguished as the first, and the second, Adam; and again, verse 47, as the first man and the second man: and their respective offices are set forth with the characteristic trait of each, the one “was made a living soul,” the other “was made a quickening spirit.” Now, in what particulars does this resemblance hold? Certainly not that Christ had a true human nature as Adam had; for in this respect Christ was not more like to the first man than to any other of the race. The point of comparison cannot be the miraculous production of the bodies of both Adam and Christ, the one from the dust of the earth, the other from the womb of a virgin. For there was no greater exercise of divine power in these cases than in the ordinary generation of men; the last differing from the other two, only in proceeding after a settled

order. Besides, the whole object of the inspired writer is to account for the resurrection of the saints, which he ascribes to Christ, and explains the reason of it by the introduction of death through Adam. The two then are compared simply as to the relations they sustain to the rest of men. 'This is plain: (verse 22,) "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive"—again, (verse 49,) "As we have borne the image of the earthy (Adam,) we shall also bear the image of the Heavenly" (Christ.) Nothing is compared here but the moral relations of both to their respective seeds: Christ shall raise the one by virtue of that covenant headship he sustained to them, precisely as Adam brought death upon the other through his covenant headship over them. The wretched gloss will not answer here that death is transmitted to Adam's seed merely through the law of a physical generation: for in the parallel case there is no such physical connexion between Christ and his seed. If the blessings of Christ accrue to his people through a moral connexion, the parallelism requires that the curse of Adam shall descend in the same way: which establishes his federal relation to the whole human family.

The final argument upon this point drawn from the particular testimony in Rom. v. ch. should be fully presented: but our limits will not allow us to enter into that field of verbal criticism: a passing reference, therefore, must suffice. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men ($\epsilon\phi'$ ω) for that all have sinned.—(verse 12.) The leading idea here conveyed is, that all men sinned and died in that one man, by whom sin and death entered into the world: in this way it is, that death came to pass upon all. For if it be affirmed that death passes upon all men, not on account of Adam's covenant sin, in which all participate, but merely on account of their own personal and actual sins, the Apostle immediately replies, (verse 14,) by the case of infants. If death arises only from sin, and yet reigns over these, it must be that they also have sinned: but it is expressly said, they have "not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," that is, in the exercise of their own agency, as personally responsible for their acts. It is impossible that these should have sinned, except representatively in their great head. Further, the testimony given in is, that judg-

ment, (a forensic term,)* came upon all men "by one of offence, δι' ενός παράπτωματος: But how can this be, except there is a legal identity between all men and Adam, by which a judicial decree shall arrest both and bring both into condemnation. Lastly, the grace of the Gospel is represented as coming by one, precisely as the sin from which it relieves came by one. But this grace comes by Christ, as the head of his seed in the covenant of grace; by consequence, sin and death must come through Adam, as the head of his race in the covenant of works.

We collect now these scattered threads of argument and weave them into one final conclusion. It has been shown that Adam was placed upon a distinct covenant platform, and stood there the representative of other interests besides his own. His whole posterity were united to him, not only by the natural tie of physical descent, but also by this moral relation of covenant headship; and in consequence of the latter, he and they were constituted a legal unit. It will necessarily follow that his act, whether of obedience or of sin, must be a *public*, not a *private*, act; and by this constitution of God, must be their act as well as his. It belongs not more to the representative than to the represented: the title of each one of the latter class is as perfect and indefeasable as that of Adam himself. The imputation of it, therefore, to them, in their successive generations, is only a formal recognition of this title: it is simply the judicial decree, rendered in due process of law, by which this whole constitution is carried out to its last and necessary result. No sooner was the forbidden fruit tasted than Adam fell under condemnation; and each descendant of his by ordinary generation is born under the same condemning sentence. This condemnation is the same in both cases, be-

* "The word *κατακριμα* is used in Scripture, in a forensic sense, in three places of the New Testament, where it is found: thus Rom. v: 16, and chapter viii: 1, and accordingly it signifies a judgment unto condemnation; as also do those words, the sense whereof has an affinity to it, in Rom. viii: 34, *τις ο κατακρινων*; and also *ακατακριτος*, as in Acts xvi: 37, and xxii: 25. So that according to the construction of the word, though *κριμα* signifies judicium in general, *κατακριμα* signifies judicium adversus aliquem, or condemnatio."—Note on p. 110, vol. 2d of Ridgley's Body of Divinity.

cause it is predicated upon the reckoning of this one covenant sin to both; and this is reckoned to both because it belongs to both; and it belongs to both in the same sense, because both were under the covenant when the trespass was committed. Both being now condemned, they are both deprived, by judicial sentence, of all original righteousness; and by necessary consequence, as shall be more largely shown, the nature of both became depraved and vicious. It thus clearly appears that the corruption of our whole nature depends directly upon the fact that we belong to a condemned and guilty race: and we are all condemned, because that one offence upon which the covenant makes the condemnation to proceed, attaches to all whom the covenant itself included: to wit, the whole race which was representatively put upon its trial.

Before dismissing the argument in favor of the doctrine of imputed sin, we turn the reader's attention to another distinct line of proof: without the admission of this principle, it is impossible to explain the transmission of a sinful nature from Adam to his posterity, without seriously implicating the justice and goodness of God. Of course it does not fall within the scope of this article to refute the detestable doctrine that sin is necessary to every moral system, and that God could not have prevented its introduction among men, even if he had willed to do so. We rebuke the blasphemy of such an assertion, because it ventures to place a limit upon Almighty Power: the falsity of it is shown in the regeneration and sanctification of actual sinners. Surely if God has wisdom and power to frame and execute a scheme by which a guilty and polluted being is both redeemed and purified, he is wise and strong enough to have prevented the declension from holiness to sin, at the first. Our present discussion has no reference whatever to the origin of sin with Adam, but to the question how a corrupt nature comes to be transmitted from him, through successive generations, to the last individual of the race. There are only two explanations of this mystery offered by those who admit inherent depravity and yet deny the strict imputation of Adam's offence. The first is, that by "*a divine constitution* the descendants of Adam have, in their natural state, the same character and condition with their progenitor"—the second is, that by the necessary law of

physical generation, Adam's corrupt nature must descend, *as a natural consequence*, to his posterity.

The first of these theories embraces substantially the doctrine of *mediate imputation*, a phrase invented about the middle of the seventeenth century, in order to cover the denial of the orthodox doctrine. Placæus had taught that original sin consisted solely in the inherent depravity of men. A national synod condemned this doctrine, because it so explicitly denied the imputation of the first sin of Adam—Placæus then invented the distinction of *mediate* and *immediate* imputation; professing to hold the doctrine of imputation, and to differ from the synod only in this, that while they viewed the imputation of Adam's sin as *immediate*, he regarded it as *mediate*. This distinction unfortunately did not die with Placæus—at this moment, and in this country, there is a large school of divines who impose upon their understandings by this *fraudulent* title. *Mediate* imputation is really no imputation at all, as it empties the doctrine of all its substance. It allows only the most remote and indirect connection between the sin of Adam and the guilt of his posterity. It predicates their condemnation simply upon the inherent corruption of nature which they derive from him; and it is only *mediately*, that is, through this corrupt nature, they have any thing to do with Adam's offence. If it is asked how this inherent depravity comes to be inherited: the answer is, through their natural relation to Adam as the great father of the race. This theory precisely inverts the orthodox belief: for while that considers imputation as prior to condemnation, and of course as prior to inherent corruption, this regards depravity of nature as the cause of condemnation, and thus, remotely, of imputation also. But the point left unexplained by this theory is, *why* should this sinful nature be transmitted? There is no dispute as to *the fact* of the transmission, nor as to *the channel* of transmission, which is by ordinary generation: the question is not *how*, but *why*—there must be a *reason* for this transmission lying yet behind, which is not drawn forth. When this inquiry is pressed, the only answer given is, that such is the constitution which God ordained: Adam should transmit his own nature, whether holy or sinful, to his posterity: he did transmit a sinful nature, and on account of this they are condemned; but there was no ante-

cedent imputation of his sin, as the orthodox hold, to be the foundation of the condemnation in question. But in what sense can such a constitution be reconciled with the justice, wisdom, or goodness of God? Here are moral beings created with a sinful nature, and, as soon as they are created, condemned because of that which they simply inherit; and yet, with the exception of the great progenitor himself, no one individual of them all has ever been put upon his trial. Condemnation should imply a previous probation—a season during which the subject is placed both under the direction and protection of law: the contravention of which law terminates at once his peaceful and happy relations with the same. Such a probation, it is admitted, Adam enjoyed; but his posterity, by an arbitrary constitution, (for it is denied that their probation was representatively accomplished in him,) are born sinful, and for this reason, put immediately under sentence of wrath. According to our view, however, it is essentially just that a moral being shall first be placed under law, subject to a fair and equal probation; and that whenever condemned, he shall be condemned in due form of law, and not by an arbitrary exercise of supreme authority. It is a serious impeachment of the government of God to refer the present condition of the human family, not to the operation of righteous and wise law, but to the simple dictate of unregulated power.

The advocates of this opinion have been accustomed to refer, for illustration and defence of it, to the curse which God laid upon the irrational and inanimate creation. In consequence of the apostasy of Adam a long train of miseries has fallen upon brute animals and even upon the insensible earth. Yet a strict imputation cannot be affirmed of these; at least not in the sense it is predicated of men. All that can be said is, that by the appointment of God the effects of the fall are visited upon them. Precisely so with the posterity of Adam—there was no antecedent imputation of his offence to them; but by God's ordination simply the effect of his sin is felt in the corrupt nature they derive from him, and being sinners in their own persons they are condemned. This is the argument in all its strength. We remark incidentally that the reference to brutes is the most unfortunate defence which could be chosen: for the relation of these to the first sin is as direct and close as their

nature will admit. Simply and alone because Adam broke the covenant, not because of any demerit in them, are these cursed. Whatever of imputation there is in the case, it is direct instead of circuitous, and close instead of remote. The analogy certainly does not clear up to us the doctrine of mediate imputation. All this, however, is by the way: our desire is to expose the singular fallacy perpetrated in the above reasoning. Though we should grant all the premises, the conclusion is lame and impotent from the inherent viciousness of the argument. If thrown into a logical form, the syllogism will be as follows:

Men and brutes suffer from the apostasy of Adam :

Brutes suffer simply by God's appointment, and without the imputation of his sin :

Men, therefore, suffer simply by God's appointment, and without imputation.

Without stopping now to challenge the minor premiss, (which to say the least requires explanation,) the deduction is wholly inconclusive. What is affirmed of brutes may not be necessarily true of men; indeed cannot be, unless these two classes are either identical, or the latter included in the former. Before the above conclusion can be sustained, it must be shown that the same principles apply in the government of rational agents and of irrational beings. The whole argument, therefore, is a beggarly assumption of the point in dispute. We cannot infer from brutes to men, because they belong to distinct classes—new attributes (for example, that of reason) are introduced when we pass from one to the other; which not only allow, but imperiously require a very different administration in the two cases. We hold it to lie in the very notion of a moral being that he shall be the subject of a law, and shall be dealt with in the way of law. This excludes all suppositions of an arbitrary constitution, that is, a constitution aside from law. But if moral beings are dealt with through law, they must hold a distinct relation to that precept and that sanction which together make up the law—and further, as the precept goes before the sanction and is presupposed by it, they cannot come under the latter but through failure to the former. But the theory we are combating places the human race before us lying first under the penalty, having sustained no previous relation to the precept: or in other

words, having had no previous trial of their obedience. To suppose this, is violently to assault the government of Him, the habitation of whose throne is justice and judgment, and before whose face mercy and truth continually go. There is no escape from this unpleasant dilemma but in the admission of Adam's covenant and representative character, and the consequent reckoning of his sin to his seed. This fulfils all the conditions of a moral government just described. God will be seen to deal with the race, not by an arbitrary constitution, but by regular administration of law. It will appear also, that the race came not under the penalty before they had failed to render obedience to the precept. This disobedience was representatively rendered through their moral head, and condemnation fell upon them in him. This gives us the moral reason for the transmission of a sinful nature from Adam to us, to wit, the imputation of his sin and condemnation thereby.

It only remains to dispose of the second theory, that a corrupt nature is transmitted, as a natural consequence, by the law of physical generation. This answer is indeed summary; and the reader should suspect its soundness from the ease with which it professes to brush away all the perplexities of a really difficult problem. Like begets its like; this is the whole secret—lions do not beget lambs—"men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles"—if Adam had begotten a son during his innocence, that son would have been holy like himself—but as Eve conceived not till he fell, the race that issued was unholy by the operation of the same law. It is perhaps necessary to say that no one disputes ordinary generation being the channel of this transmission. What we seek is a moral reason for the transmission through this channel—and we demur to the statement that this physical law opens all the mysteries of the case. This theory clearly involves the derivation of the soul *ex traduce* from the parent, in the same manner as the body. It is the soul that is the seat of sin: "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, thefts," &c. The old notion of the ancient philosophers, who considered matter as inherently vicious and communicating its taint to the spirit, originated from their utter inability, without revelation, to account for the existence of evil. But this awkward and absurd explanation has long been set aside by the

clear testimony of Scripture. Manifestly then, if we rely alone upon the law of physical generation to account for the transmission of depravity, it is because we believe the soul, like the body, propagated from father to son. If this shall be disproved, we are thrown perfectly afloat for a reason of the transmission in question.

Many of the earthly Fathers, as for instance, Tertullian, Apollinaris, and most probably Augustine, contended for the traduction of souls, because this seemed necessary to the transmission of sin. Zanchius gives this account of their views: * "Nulla alia ratio superesse videbatur, qua peccati originalis propagatio defendi posset, quàm si dicerent animas, etiam simul cum corporibus, ab anima illa prima peccato contaminata propagari. Ergo ut retineretur doctrina de peccato originali, qua omnino negari non potest, quin totum Christi beneficium pereat, sententiam de propagatione animorum per traducem acriter defenderunt." We are too near the end of this article to go into an extended discussion of a collateral issue like this. Indeed this labor is rendered superfluous by the fact that this opinion, though long maintained from the most pious of motives, is now generally conceded to be erroneous; and it is seen to be unnecessary to the defence of the transmission of sin. The reader who desires to sift this question to the bottom will do well to consult the work of Zanchius already quoted, the work of Burgess on Original Sin, and the *Theologia Maastricht*, Lib. 3. Cap. 9, § 20; also Lib. 4, Cap. 2, § 35: in all which the arguments on either side are fully stated. The following reasons, among others, will probably satisfy the more hasty reader, that with justice the doctrine of the traduction of souls is now generally surrendered. 1. It is difficult to guard it from running into a view of the soul, as material and corporeal, as compounded, divisible, and of course exposed to decay. Even the ingenious analogies of the ancient writers, such as that of "lux ex lumine," do not relieve the theory of this materialistic tendency. 2. There are many passages of Scripture which are careful to ascribe the creation of the soul immediately, and in a high sense, to God: the following may be consulted: Num. xvi: 22; Ps.

* Zanchii Opera. Tom. 3. Lib. 2. de Origine Animorum.

xxxiii: 15; Eccl. iii: 21, and xii: 7; Isa. lvii: 16, and Zech. xii: 1. 3. The soul of Christ was evidently not thus derived, but was immediately created. Yet he is said to have been made in all points like us, sin excepted. At least he should have the two parts of human nature, substantially like ourselves—his body was formed, supernaturally indeed, yet still from the body of the woman; and by parity of reason, we may infer the immediate creation of all human souls from the immediate creation of his. 4. The correlative doctrine of justification through the righteousness of Christ effectually displaces this dogma of condemnation because of a physically generated sinful soul. We are justified in Christ clearly upon the same principles by which we are condemned in Adam. But there is only a moral or spiritual connection between Christ and his seed; which renders it plain, that however a physical generation of the body may be the medium of transmission, the reason of the transmission is to be found in the moral relation of the race to the first man. It will not be necessary to expand any of these points.

Discarding now the theory of the traduction of souls, we are met by the very difficulty which pressed the ancients: how, if the souls of men are created immediately by God, shall we exempt him from the charge of being the author of sin? The doctrine of immediate imputation alone relieves from the difficulty. It is important to trace this matter through. The moment Adam fell, he became subject to the penalty, the essence of which is "the wrath of God." This wrath takes effect upon each department of his nature—it dissolves the body, which is temporal death—it separates the soul from communion with God, which is spiritual death—it exposes the whole man, soul and body, to the vengeance of God forever, which results in eternal death. This is the condition of fallen Adam, and equally the condition of each one of his seed. These are all born under condemnation through the immediate imputation of his sin; of course the penalty takes effect upon them in this threefold way also. The body which is generated is a mortal body, having "the sentence of death written in its members," and the soul is created in a state of estrangement from God. Instead of being formed, as Adam's was, in the

image of God, "in knowledge and true holiness," it is formed without that image, and simply endowed with those faculties which essentially belong to it as soul—entire corruption of nature follows upon this immediate loss of God's image and union with him in that image. In the language of Turretine,* "distinguendum sit inter animam puram, impuram et non puram. Illa pura dicitur, quæ ornata est habitu sanctitatis; impura, quæ contrarium habitum injustitiæ habet; non pura, quæ licet nullum habeat habitum bonum, nullum tamen habet malum, sed creatur simpliciter cum facultatibus naturalibus," &c. This last is the state in which we suppose the soul to be created: without the "habitum bonum" or the "habitum malum;" only "cum facultatibus naturalibus." But spiritual life consists in the union and communion of the soul with God: of this it is judicially deprived, on account of the covenant sin of Adam, which—because it is a covenant sin—is equally theirs. Entire corruption of nature ensues necessarily, just as darkness and death from the perpetual withdrawal of the sun. God is not the author of this sinful nature, unless he infuses sin into the soul: this he does not:† "non propterea"—we quote still from Turretine—"Deus potest censeri author peccati, quia aliud est impuritatem infundere, aliud puritatem non dare quâ homo se indignum reddidit in Adamo." Indeed, God is seen clearly to be not "author peccati sed vindex." In the carrying out of a judicial sentence simply, he creates the soul void of that original righteousness of which the judicial sentence itself deprives it. As stated by Turretine,‡ "hic exercitium justitiæ attendum est, et aliquod sanctissimum, licet arcanum ac admirabile Dei judicium." The moment the human nature is completed by the union of the soul with the body (at whatever point of time this is effected) entire depravity ensues, because the soul no longer possesses the image of God, and derives no spiritual life from communion with him.

It has not been the design of this article to make a full showing of the proofs of the doctrine of imputation; but simply to develop two of the principal: 1. That it flows

* *Institutio Theologiae Eloquentiæ*, Tom. 1, p. 706.

† *Ibid.*, p. 708.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 685.

from the very nature of the covenant which God made with Adam: 2. That without the antecedent imputation of his sin, there could be no transmission of a corrupt nature to his posterity. It is a doctrine, we know, which peculiarly excites the enmity of the carnal mind, and the opposition it has met has induced many to enter upon the defence of the truth, after it has been demonstrated. It would be easy, for example, to show that the only attack upon the doctrine must really be directed against the great principle upon which the imputation rests, to wit, that of representation. This principle is wholly right or wholly wrong. How shall men undertake to prove it wholly wrong, when in the most common transactions of life they employ it, and when it can be shown to enter, more or less an essential element, into every government under heaven? If right among men, how can it be challenged as wrong when employed by God? We confess however to a latent scepticism of all these illustrations and defences of the divine economy. We sympathize deeply with the following remarks from Haldane: * "The defenders of scriptural truth take wrong ground when they rest it on any thing but the testimony of Scripture. It is highly dishonorable to God to refuse to submit to his decisions till we can demonstrate their justice. Those who have endeavored to vindicate the divine justice in accounting Adam's sin to be ours, and to reconcile the mind of man to that procedure, have not only labored in vain, but actually injured the case they meant to uphold. The connexion, according to which we suffer with our first Father, is not such as is to be vindicated or illustrated by human transactions. The union of Adam and his posterity is a divine constitution. The grounds of this constitution are not to be found in any of the justifiable transactions of men; and all attempts to make us submit by convincing us of its propriety from what we are able to understand upon a comparison with the affairs of men, are only calculated to impose on credulity and to produce unbelief." Here, then, we rest. We leave the doctrine with the reader, not without proof of its truth, but without defence of its propriety. In this propriety we ourselves cheerfully acquiesce: but

* Commentary on Romans, p. 227.

the doctrine will be a stone of stumbling to some, a corner stone of salvation to others, just as it may please God.

There is however one gross misapprehension, originating as we conceive less in ignorance than in malice, which we must expose before laying down the pen. It is alleged that imputation involves a transference of personal character and acts from one being to another. This absurd charge is principally built upon the ambiguous terms which, for want of better, have been employed to define the doctrine. For example, the phrase "moral person" has been applied to Adam and his race, representing the idea of a strict union between them, which is the ground of the imputation: and in this article we have several times spoken of the legal identity of Adam and his seed. Upon these terms, endless changes have been rung, as though they confounded all notions of personal identity and consciousness. We are charged with holding that each of Adam's race committed personally the sin of eating the forbidden fruit, and must feel his remorse, &c.: in other words, we are accused of this huge nonsense, that each member of the human family is transfused into the personal Adam, having his consciousness and doing his act. But can it be overlooked that when the terms "person" and "identity" are employed, they are limited by qualifying epithets, which precisely define the use that is made of them? If a bank or rail road company are spoken of as a *legal person*, is this term understood as confounding all the personal consciousnesses of the individuals who compose the corporation? Surely not: the epithet legal restricts the term person to a legal sense: the phrase simply indicates that these persons are one only in the eye of law, and that too only so far as their corporate acts are concerned. So again, if the endorser is called to pay a note instead of the principal, it is because the law regards the drawer and the endorser as a legal unit: but does this destroy the personal identity of either? There is only a transference of legal responsibilities, not of personal character, to the endorser. The original drawer may have failed in his obligations through open fraud—yet the endorser neither repents for him nor feels his remorse—he is only identified with him as to the payment of the note. So in the imputation of Adam's sin, there is no transference of personal character and acts to the race: they are one in

law, because Adam is invested with a representative character: his sin therefore is, in view of law, equally their sin, and accordingly is so imputed. If they possess a vicious character also, like that of Adam, it is not by transference from him, but by inheritance: by ordinary generation from him and in consequence of their own just condemnation, they came to be depraved.

The confusion, so far as it is honest, arises from not distinguishing between Adam's private relation to the law as an individual, and his public relation to it as the head of a covenant. What is imputed is not any of the private acts of Adam, but that one offence committed by him in his representative character. The distinction is well presented by Dr. Williams thus:* "Adam's breach of law as a *rule*, which brought guilt upon him as an *individual*, is not the guilt imputable to his posterity. During his long life, no doubt he was guilty of innumerable offences after the first transgression, but not one of these is imputed to us: the reason is that after he broke the condition of the charter, he stood upon the bare ground of personal moral obligation. But personal guilt, on such ground, cannot in equity be transferred from one to another. The sins of the father, whether the first father or any other, considered merely as a *personal* deviation from rectitude, or a breach of moral obligation, cannot be imputed to the children." So too Turretine:† "Actus unius non potest esse et dici universorum, si sit actus mere personalis." * * * Adam sane fuit unus individuo et persona singularis; sed in hoc actu non spectatur ut persona singularis, sed potius ut principium et caput totius generis," &c. There is then no transference of his acts, but simply the imputation of this one offence. We feel no remorse for his sin, nor do we repeat specifically of it, any more than we are self-complacent in view of Christ's federal work. But it is our duty to deplore Adam's breach of trust, and to bewail that sinful nature which we inherit because of it. As too in every actual sin, we assume and endorse the sin which is imputed, it becomes us in our confessions to acknowledge it—and while we look with shame and sorrow upon our connexion with the first Adam, to look with faith and joy upon the second.

* President Edward's Works, vol. 2, p. 535, Notes.

† Institutio Theologiae Elencticæ, Tom. 1, p. 689.