

A Treatise on the Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin

by
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APPENDIX.

Note A.

It has been frequently asserted, that "the doctrine of original sin was unknown to the Church before the fifth century;" and that "it was *invented* by Augustine in his controversy with Pelagius." The best refutation of this statement is to be found in the fact that the denial of this doctrine by Pelagius, together with his other errors, excited the surprise and horror of the universal church. Fuller, the historian, tells us that, "To recount the learned works of the fathers written; their pious sermons preached; passionate epistles sent; private conferences entertained; public disputations held; provincial synods summoned; general councils called; wholesome canons made; to confute and condemn these opinions, under the name of Pelagius or his scholar Cælestius, would amount to a volume fitter for a porter's back to bear, than a scholar's brains to peruse." *Fuller's Church Hist.* Cent. v. p. 28.

Note B.

The reference in this paragraph is to the *New Haven System*, which has been extensively introduced within the past twelve years into the Presbyterian Church. That the sentiment here ascribed to that system, forms an essential part of it, is well known to every one at all familiar with the recent controversy. "Since nothing is sin (says Prof. Fitch) in any given being but *his own conduct in violation of known duty*, it is obvious that the Scriptures intend not to teach that men are, individually, the subjects of sin by the imputation of guilt, or by vitiosity of constitution, previous to moral and accountable action, or separate from it. Nothing can with truth be called his (man's) original sin, but his *first moral choice* or preference being evil."--*Two Discourses on the Nature of Sin*.

"Nor does the moral depravity of man consist in any *disposition or tendency* to sin, which is *the cause of all sin*."--*Dr. Taylor, Concio ad Clerum*.

"Neither sin nor holiness, we apprehend, can be predicated of any but moral agents."
"There is no sin except such as consists in a man's own voluntary act."--*Christian Spectator*, vol. i.

"Even in this inferior, fallen, degraded condition, sin, in the proper sense of this word, viz. a voluntary transgression of Divine law by a rational, moral, and free agent, is not a thing

in its own nature *necessary*, nor strictly inevitable. It can be committed only by *an act of choice*."-- Rev. Prof. Stuart of the Andover Theological Seminary.

"A nature cannot be holy. *The nature of Adam at his creation was not holy*. Adam was made with a nature neither sinful nor holy. When he began to *act*, he made it his governing purpose to serve God."--Rev. Chas. G. Finney.

How nearly this theory coincides with Unitarianism, may be inferred from the following exposition of the Unitarian doctrine by one of their leading ministers. "Man is by nature innocent and pure, free from all moral corruption, as well as destitute of all positive holiness." "He is by nature no more inclined or disposed to vice than to virtue, and is equally capable in the ordinary use of his faculties, and with the common assistance afforded him, of either. He derives from his ancestors a frail and mortal nature; is made with appetites which fit him for the condition of being in which God has placed him; but in order for them to answer all the purposes intended, they are so strong as to be very liable to abuse by excess. He has passions implanted in him which are of great importance in the conduct of life, but which are equally capable of impelling him into a wrong or a right course. He has natural affections, all of them originally good, but liable, by a wrong direction, to be the occasion of error or sin."--Dr. Ware's *Letters to Trinitarians and Calvinists*.

Note C.

The argument from Infant Baptism, was strongly pressed upon Pelagius and his coadjutor Cælestius. "Of what advantage is it (says Augustine to the former) that you make use of the same words in the baptism of infants as adults, when you take away the thing signified in this sacrament?" Milner says, that when this custom was urged upon Cælestius, "as a proof of the belief of the Church in all ages, that infants needed redemption, he declared that they had no need of remission, and yet ought to be baptized, that they might be sanctified in Christ."--*Ch. Hist.* vol. ii. (Lond. ed.) p. 373.

The answer which the advocates of the New Theology in our country give to this objection, is still more remarkable. "But is there no significancy (says the *Christian Spectator*) in the use of the purifying element of water in this ordinance? Certainly. It indicates that the being to whom it is applied, *will* need the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit, from the earliest moment that such influences can in the nature of the case take effect. But neither sin nor holiness, we apprehend, can be predicated of any but moral agents."--*Christian Spectator* for 1829, p. 374.

Is it not a mockery to administer the ordinance with these views of it?

Note D.

It is true, that the class of theologians here referred to, profess to believe that infants are saved. It is, however, maintained by them, (see quotation in note C,) not only that infants do not *need* "the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit" prior to moral agency, but that those influences *cannot* "take effect" upon them, before that period; that is, *God cannot regenerate an infant!* How this revolting sentiment can be reconciled with the doctrine of infant salvation, it is not easy to see.

Note E.

The writer of this dissertation has himself heard the sentiment, that "infants need no Saviour," avowed by an individual who is now a minister, in connection with the body which has lately broken off from the Presbyterian Church.

Note F.

The Church of England, (besides the testimony in her Ninth Article already cited,) holds this strong language on this subject in one of her homilies:

"Man, of his own nature, is fleshly and carnal, corrupt and naught, sinful and disobedient to God, without any spark of goodness in him, without an virtuous or godly motion, only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds."--*Homily for Whitsunday, Part I.*

The Saybrook Platform, or Confession of Faith of the Churches of Connecticut, adopted in 1708, asserts the doctrine of the covenant of works, the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, and native depravity, in almost the identical language of our own standards.

Note G.

That theologians who differ widely on other subjects, concur in the opinion here expressed, that the doctrine of original sin is fundamental to the Christian scheme, may be learned from the following quotations:

"I look on the doctrine (of original sin) as of great importance; which everybody will doubtless own it is, if it be true. For if the case be such indeed, that all mankind are by nature in a state of total ruin, both with respect to the moral evil of which they are the subjects, and the afflictive evil to which they are exposed, the one as the consequence and punishment of the other, then doubtless the great salvation by Christ, stands in direct relation to this ruin, as the remedy to the disease; and the whole gospel, or doctrine of

salvation, must suppose it; and all real belief, or true notion of that gospel, must be built upon it."--President Edwards--Preface to his *Treatise on Original Sin*.

"If, therefore, we take away this foundation, that man is by nature foolish and sinful, fallen short of the glorious image of God, *the Christian system falls at once*; nor will it deserve so honourable an appellation as that of 'a cunningly devised fable.'"--John Wesley--Preface to his *Work on Original Sin*.

"Now we confess ourselves to be of the number of those who believe, whatever reproach it may bring upon us from a certain quarter, that if the doctrine of *imputation* be given up, the whole doctrine of original sin must be abandoned. And *if this doctrine be relinquished*, then *the whole doctrine of redemption must fall*, and what may then be left of Christianity, they may contend for that will; but for ourselves we shall be of opinion that what remains will not be worth a serious struggle."--Dr. Alexander--in the *Biblical Repertory*.

The following extract is still more to our purpose. It is taken from an article entitled, "Prosecution of the Rev. Albert Barnes," in the leading *Unitarian Review* in this country. The strain of levity which pervades the paragraph, will not diminish its force as testimony.

"It may now occur to some of our readers to ask, What is all this windy war of words about? What are the causes of all this stir in the camp of orthodoxy? What is the precise amount of innovation which is thought to threaten the very existence of the Presbyterian Church? The causes may be stated in few words. They are the intellectual progress of the age, and an attempt on the part of the *more enlightened*, to explain the Calvinistic system, in consistency with the laws of our mental and moral nature, and the plain dictates of common sense. This can never be done. The system itself, though a castle built in the air, is most admirably framed together. The acutest minds have been for ages compacting and fitting together its parts. Now take away a single particle, and it all tumbles into ruins. If an air-built structure can be said to have a corner-stone, that corner-stone is the doctrine of original sin. *Take away this, and, though the building for a while may seem to stand fast, if you consider it more closely, you find it tottering to its fall*. This is the doctrine which is now attacked in different forms, and hence the whole hive is in motion."--*Christian Examiner*, for Nov. 1836.

"The views of Wilberforce on the subject of native depravity, you well know, were substantially the views of the great multitude of pious and learned divines of the two last centuries, who were lights of the world while living, and whose memory is embalmed in the hearts of the pious. They were the views of Owen, and Baxter, and Bates, and Howe, and Flavel, and Watts, and Doddridge, and Scott. They were the views of Edwards, and Bellamy, and Davies, and Dwight. It will not be easy to convince the world that these men were shallow-reasoners, or sour-minded bigots; or that the doctrine which they laid as the foundation of solid theology and vital piety, was mere fancy and delusion.

"In opposition to the views you have repeatedly expressed, I must declare my decided conviction that the doctrine in question is a doctrine of fundamental importance, and vital to the whole scheme of theoretic and practical Christianity. If, indeed, as you seem to suppose, it is an affair of mere *terminology*, then I have a right to inquire, why so much zeal for a *new terminology*? If no new doctrine is to be taught, and of course, no new light given, why should mere *words* be made the occasion of convulsing the church, and pouring contumely on its ministers? Suppose that the advocates of native depravity are even extremely tenacious of the old phraseology, believing that to part with it is to hazard the loss of scriptural truth; may they not claim the forbearance of their brethren in opposition, who, upon their own principles, can allege no adequate motive for imposing a *new phraseology*? Must a sacrifice be made, and a danger incurred, without the shadow of compensating advantage?

"But that this is a mere verbal debate, or a debate of small importance, is confidently denied. It cannot be believed that *moral purity* and *moral impurity*, that *innocence* and *sin*, are convertible terms.

"All who read the Bible find it much occupied in delineating the character of man. Most readers have perceived in this delineation, a character of real, sinful depravity. Others assume the position that this depravity is *innocent*; and they are very confident that a doctrine of this kind will answer all the purposes of religion. But are they *sure* of this? May they not mistake? May not that which they declare to be a mere *modification* of a truth, be a real *denial* of a truth? May not the truth thus denied be a point of essential importance? May it not have aspects and bearings which they have never discovered, nor so much as suspected? Such is the infirmity of the human mind, that no man who denies, or expunges from his system, or even *modifies*, a single truth of inspiration, can be assured that he is not *corrupting the whole system of religion, doctrinal and practical*. What a tremendous responsibility does he then assume--especially if the truth in question belongs not to the superstructure of religion, but to its very foundation. Such is unquestionably the case with the doctrine we are considering. By most divines, and by most Christians, it has been thought hitherto, that the man who is essentially wrong in his views of human depravity, can be right nowhere in religion.

"What the great Roman orator says of the liberal arts, is true of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. They are linked together by a common bond. Indeed, the mutual connection and dependence are far closer in this case, than in the former. Strike from the Christian system a single link, and soon the whole chain falls asunder, and disappears. Remove the radical depravity of the heart, and you have no place for any other truths of the gospel. And if you materially *modify* this doctrine, you soon find that the modifying process must *go through*. Regeneration becomes another thing. Repentance assumes a new aspect. The Christian conflict is dispensed with. The atonement loses half its value. And the song of *salvation by grace* becomes an empty sound."--*The Rev. Dr. Dana, of Newburyport*, in his "Letters to Professor Stuart:"--a pamphlet published since the first edition of this work was

issued from the press, in which the semi-Pelagian heresy of our day is discussed with admirable ability, and in a fine tone of Christian feeling.

Note H.

"In order to account for a sinful corruption of nature, yea, a total native depravity of the heart of man, there is not the least need of supposing any evil quality infused, implanted, or wrought into the nature of man, by any positive cause or influence whatsoever, either from God or the creature; or of supposing that man is conceived and born with a *fountain of evil* in his heart, such as is anything properly positive. I think a little attention to the nature of things will be sufficient to satisfy any impartial considerate inquirer, that the absence of positive good principles, and so the withholding of a special divine influence to impart and maintain those good principles--leaving the common natural principles of self-love, natural appetite, &c., to themselves, without the government of superior divine principles, will certainly be followed with the corruption, yea, the total corruption of the heart, without occasion for any *positive* influence at all: and that it was thus in fact that corruption of nature came on Adam, immediately on his fall, and comes on all his posterity as sinning in him and falling with him. * * * *

"As Adam's nature became corrupt, without God's implanting or infusing of any evil thing into it, so does the nature of his posterity. God dealing with Adam as the head of his posterity and treating them as one, he deals with his posterity as having all sinned in him. And, therefore, as God withdrew spiritual communion, and his vital gracious influence from the common head, so he withholds the same from all the members, as they come into existence; whereby they come into the world mere *flesh*, and entirely under the government of natural and inferior principles; and so become wholly corrupt, as Adam did."--*Edwards on Original Sin*, p. iv. ch. 2.

Note I.

The following passage, written more than eighty years ago, would seem to have been designed for our times. It shows that the course of error is the same in every age.

"What further confirms the certainty of the proof of original sin, which this place [Rom. v. 12-19] affords, is this, that the utmost art cannot pervert it to another sense. *What a variety of the most artful methods have been used by the enemies of this doctrine to wrest and darken this paragraph of Holy Writ*, which stands so much in their way; as it were, to force the Bible to speak a language agreeable to their mind! How have expressions been strained, words and phrases racked! What strange figures of speech have been invented, and, with violent hands thrust into the Apostle's mouth; and then with a bold countenance, and magisterial airs, obtruded on the world, as from him! But, blessed be God, we have his words, as he

delivered them, and the rest of the same epistle, and his other writings, to compare with them, by which his meaning stands in too strong and glaring a light to be hid by any of the artificial mists which they labour to throw upon it. It is really no less than *abusing* the Scripture and its readers, to represent this paragraph as the most *obscure* of all the places of Scripture that speak of the consequences of Adam's sin, and treat it as if there was need first to consider other places as more plain. Whereas, it is most manifestly a place in which these things are declared, the most plainly, particularly, precisely, and of set-purpose, by that great apostle, who has most fully explained to us those doctrines in general which relate to the redemption by Christ, and the sin and misery we are redeemed from. As this place in general is very full and plain, so the doctrine of the corruption of nature as derived from Adam, and also the imputation of his first sin, are both clearly taught in it. The imputation of Adam's one transgression, is indeed most directly and frequently asserted."--*Edwards on Original Sin*, part ii. ch. 4.

Note K.

Those who have not attended to the recent improvements in theology, will be surprised to learn that it is now gravely maintained that temporal death forms no part of the penalty of the law! The Christian Spectator for June, 1831, (in an article entitled "Case of the Rev. Mr. Barnes,") devotes several pages to an attempt to establish this position. The orthodox doctrine on the subject is of course fatal to their system; for if death be a penal evil, infants are evidently in a state of condemnation. Hence the necessity for setting aside the doctrine. Pelagius did not even admit that temporal death is "a consequence" of Adam's sin, but held that our first parents were created mortal, and would have died had they not fallen.

Note L.

Hostility to creeds, has, for obvious reasons, always gone hand in hand with heretical opinions. The utility and even necessity of creeds, might be illustrated by the history of almost every great heresy which has invaded the church. To cite a single example:--When *Arius*, who had been for some time propagating his pernicious sentiments, was at length summoned before the Council of Nice, (A.D. 325,) it was found impossible to guard against his subtleties, without some explanatory terms defining what the Scriptures had revealed. "Did the Trinitarians, (says Milner,) assert that Christ was God? the Arians allowed it, but in the same sense as holy men and angels are styled gods in Scripture. Did they affirm that he was truly God? the others allowed that he was made so by God. Did they affirm that the Son was naturally of God? it was granted; for even we, said they, are of God, of whom are all things. Was it affirmed that the Son was the power, wisdom, and image of the Father? we admit it, replied the others, for we also are said to be the image and glory of God. What could the Trinitarians do in this situation? To leave the matter undecided was to do

nothing: to confine themselves merely to Scripture terms, was to suffer the Arians to explain the doctrine in their own way, and to reply nothing. Undoubtedly they had a right to comment according to their own judgment, as well as the Arians; and they did so in the following manner. They collected together the passages of Scripture which represent the Divinity of the Son of God, and observed, that, taken together, they amounted to a proof of his being '*of the same substance with the Father,*' ὁμοούσιος." To this formula, Arius refused to assent, and he was deposed and excommunicated.

Note M.

This is not the place to exhibit in detail the *system* of error, which has of late years spread with such alarming rapidity in this country. There is one of its leading characteristics, however, (seldom presented to the public eye,) which illustrates so forcibly the bold and reckless spirit of the system, that I cannot refrain from unfolding it to the readers of this essay. I refer to the low and unworthy views which it inculcates of the Deity. One of the main pillars of the New Haven theology, is the horrible assumption that God *has no power to prevent the introduction of sin into a moral system*--that for aught he can do to the contrary, his rational creatures may sin in any possible system which he can frame. The following quotations contain the proof of this statement.

"It is to him a subject of regret and grief, yet men transgress; they rebel in spite of his wishes; they persevere in sin in spite of all which He *can* do to reclaim them."--Rev. E. R. Tyler.

"It is a groundless assumption that God could have prevented all sin, or at least, the present degree of sin in a moral system."--Dr. Taylor.

"It is in vain to talk of his omnipotence preventing sin. If infinite motives cannot prevent it, it cannot be prevented under a moral government, and to maintain the contrary is absurd and a contradiction. To administer moral laws is not the object of physical power. To maintain, therefore, that the physical omnipotence of God can prevent sin, is *to talk nonsense*."--Rev. C. G. Finney.

"We affirm that the causes in kind which originate sin, being inseparably inherent in a moral universe, may so accumulate in degree under every system of Providence and government which can be pursued, as to render sure the occurrence of sin. If in a universe of such beings, no possible system of Providence pursued through eternity, can shut out all occasions of the outbreakings of sin, it is easy to see that as to His preventing it, *sin is unavoidably incident* to the acts of the Creator in creating and governing such a kingdom. . . . If the causes of defectibility are thus inseparable from the existence of a universe of moral beings, is there not a ground of probability that they *will lead to actual*

defection in every possible system as well as this?"--Prof. Fitch.

It may be doubted whether in the whole compass of theology anything can be found from professedly orthodox writers, more derogatory to the divine character than the doctrine set forth in these quotations. And as to its bearing upon the creature, it was well remarked by the late Dr. Griffin, (in his work on Divine Efficiency,) that "this is infinitely the gloomiest idea that was ever thrown upon the world." "If God could not have prevented sin in the universe, he cannot prevent believers from fatally falling. He cannot prevent Gabriel and Paul from sinking at once into devils, and heaven from turning into a hell." "And how awfully gloomy as it respects the prospects of individual believers! You have no security that you shall stand an hour. And even if you get to heaven, you have no certainty of remaining there a day. All is doubt and sepulchral gloom."

It may readily be supposed that a doctrine like that asserted in the foregoing extracts, cannot stand alone. The views of moral agency on which it rests, must necessarily lead to a modification of almost every distinctive doctrine of the gospel. And, accordingly, the system which is built upon it, involves a virtual denial of the doctrines of election, original sin, a vicarious atonement, regeneration by the sovereign operation of the Holy Spirit, and justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ. The terms which denote these doctrines may be retained, but they are employed in a sense unknown to the orthodox church, and subversive of the gospel. For the proof of this statement the reader is referred to the valuable work of Mr. Wood, entitled "Old and New Theology."

Note N.

Evasion and concealment, with their kindred arts, have characterized the incipient stage of every system of error with which the Church has been corrupted. Look, for example, at the rise of Arminianism.

Arminius was a candidate for the chair of theology in the University of Leyden: but being suspected of unsoundness in the faith, he was required, as a condition of his investiture with the office, to make an explicit declaration of his sentiments on all the leading heads of doctrine. To this he readily consented, and "in the presence of the trustees of the university, he most solemnly renounced the errors of Pelagius, respecting grace, free-will, predestination, original sin, perfection in this life, &c., and declared his agreement with Augustine and the other fathers, who had written against Pelagius. He at the same time solemnly promised that he would never inculcate any doctrine different from that received by the churches: upon which he was admitted to the professorship of theology. . . . But after he had been in office for a year or two, he began both in public and private to attack the commonly received doctrines of the Reformed Churches, with the same arguments which were used to impugn them by the Jesuits and Socinians; and he circulated among the students compositions of his own in manuscript, in which he treated contemptuously the

characters of Calvin, Beza, Zanchius, and Ursinus, while he extolled the writings of certain authors who were suspected of being inimical to orthodoxy. And he now openly avowed that he had many animadversions to make on the commonly received doctrines; and his scholars, when they left the university, petulantly insulted the reformed churches, by disputing, contradicting, and reviling their doctrines." Yet even after this he denied that there was any real foundation for the rumors which were in circulation impeaching his orthodoxy. [Those who may wish to see the details of this matter, are referred to Dr. Thomas Scott's work on the Synod of Dort.]

Again, it is well known that *Unitarianism* was introduced into New England in the most covert manner. The Unitarian ministers of Boston and its vicinity studiously concealed their sentiments for several years. William Wells, Esq., of Boston, (a Unitarian,) in a letter to Mr. Belsham, in England, dated March 21st, 1812, says, "With regard to the progress of Unitarianism, I have little to say. Its tenets have spread very extensively in New England, but I believe that there is only one church *professedly* Unitarian." "Most of our Boston clergy, and respectable laymen, are Unitarian." "At the same time the controversy is seldom or never *introduced into the pulpit.*" In commenting on another letter from this country, Mr. Belsham attempts an apology for the concealment practised by the Unitarian clergy of Boston, in the following words: "Can it be reasonably expected of a body of clergy nursed in the lap of ease and affluence, and placed in a station of such high secular consideration and comfort as that of the ministers of Boston, that they should come forward, and by an open profession of unpopular truth, voluntarily risk the loss of all their temporal dignity and comfort, and incur the contempt and enmity of many who are now their warmest admirers and friends?"

The 'Spirit of the Pilgrims,' from which these extracts are taken, contains a mass of testimony to the same effect.

Historical statements like those just quoted, are full of admonition to the churches in this country. The same means which were employed for the propagation of error in the two cases specified above, have been successfully adopted in our day for diffusing the semi-Pelagianism of the New Haven school. The friends of that system claim to be sound Calvinists. They repel with warmth the imputation that they have abandoned the faith of their fathers. They allege that they differ from the brethren opposed to them, only in their 'phraseology,' and in the explanations they give of Scripture facts; that is, they "agree as to the facts, but differ in the philosophy of the facts." They profess to be, pre-eminently, the *friends of peace*, and to have an instinctive horror of controversy, as tending to retard the progress of evangelical religion. And they have actually succeeded in convincing many intelligent and excellent people, that the controversy which has recently rent the Presbyterian Church, and which is likely soon to draw another line of separation through the Congregational Churches of New England, is nothing more than a *debate about words*.

How much weight these considerations are entitled to, may be inferred from the fact that

the system they advocate is viewed with alarm and abhorrence by the great body of the orthodox divines all over the country, and hailed with acclamations by the Unitarian clergy. The late venerable Dr. Hyde, of Massachusetts, in a letter dated April 13th, 1830, says: "I notice, with much trembling, the progress of error in this land and among the churches of New England. The New Haven scheme of theology is a broad step-stone to Arminianism. You may possibly live to have your attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ put to a severe test. The doctrines of sovereign grace are more and more discarded."

Dr. Humphrey, the President of Amherst College, says: "My opinion, expressed freely and everywhere, is, that the gentlemen at New Haven are building their system more on philosophy than on the Bible; that this philosophy is Arminian, and can never support a Calvinistic creed. My solemn belief is, that the tendency of the scheme is to bring in a flood of Arminianism, or rather, perhaps I ought to say, of Pelagianism upon our churches."

The late Rev. Dr. Fiske, president of the Wesleyan University in Connecticut, a zealous and able Arminian, in replying to a review of his Sermon on Predestination by Professor Fitch, severely rebukes the reviewer for his want of candor in pretending to be a Calvinist, while really subverting the Calvinistic system. "If it is *safer* (says Dr. F.) to attack Calvinism in this indirect way, I will not object. But I cannot see that it would be safer. An open, bold front, always ends best. As I understand the reviewer, from the days of John Calvin down to the present hour, there is, on this point, between the great body of Calvinists and himself, almost no likeness except in the use of words. Theirs is one doctrine, his another. Why then does he hail from that party and hoist their signals, and then, after seeming to get the victory, by espousing the very cause of the assailed, encourage the Calvinists to triumph, as if their cause had been successful?"¹

The Rev. Noah Worcester, an influential *Unitarian* minister, in a work of his, published in 1833, passes high commendation on the New Haven system. After quoting a paragraph from the Christian Spectator on the subject of depravity, (presenting that doctrine in the form in which it was, previous to the late secession, propagated extensively in the Presbyterian Church,) he adds, "I rejoice that such views of human nature have been proposed and are acquiring belief. If I have not misunderstood these writers, the New Haven theology asserts that sin is a voluntary transgression of a known law, and that as infants are incapable of moral agency, they are incapable of sin; and that there is no such thing as sinful nature antecedent to sinful volition, or moral action. They strongly assert that nature is not sinful. Thus far I acquiesce." And again, "Within a few years Dr. Taylor, of New Haven, with his associates, including the Christian Spectator, have done much to diminish the reputation of what has been regarded as the orthodox and Calvinistic views on the subject of original sin."--See "*letters on the Origin and Progress of the New Haven Theology.*"

1 It ought to be stated in justice to the Arminians, that they are so far from sanctioning the New Theology in general, that, in common with old Calvinists, they regard it as "another gospel."

The (Unitarian) "Christian Examiner," in the article already mentioned, says, in reference to the spread of the New Theology in the Presbyterian Church: "These innovations are not so important in themselves as they are for the results to which they lead, as the prelude of an *entire revolution* in the popular theology of the day." "We conclude, therefore, as we began, by saying, that the cause of liberal Christianity has received a powerful impulse from the late doings in the Presbyterian Church, and that *the end is not yet.*"--*Christian Examiner, for Nov. 1836.*

To the above questions, (most of which were contained in the first edition of this work,) is now subjoined part of an article from the "Christian Register," the *Unitarian* newspaper published in Boston. The article was written soon after the trial of the Presbyterian Church case in the spring of 1839, in which the New-school party obtained a verdict, and before that verdict was set aside.

"THE PRESBYTERIAN CASE.--This contest is of much interest, to all denominations of Christians--but most so to that portion of the Christian world, which stands foremost in opposition to all spiritual domination, and is labouring to make every man free in Christ. For the legalities of the case we care little. But we dwell on its source, its spirit, its promise, with much satisfaction--with kindling hope.

"While we contemplate the subject in this light, we feel animated and strengthened. We have not laboured in vain. *The seed we have sown has taken root, and begins to bear its proper fruit.* If we faint not, we shall soon reap a more abundant harvest. The holy principles for which we have struggled and suffered no little reproach, are shedding their quickening, resistless energies, into the bosom of every church in our country. The stagnant blood begins to flow, and the heart to swell beyond every restraint imposed on its loftier impulses--its diviner aspirations."

"What is the origin of this difficulty among the Presbyterians? It is an effort on the part of those we deem more enlightened and politic, if not more liberal, to bring Calvinism into conformity with the advanced intelligence of the times, to place it on a new and less exposed basis, to conceal by a haze of choice words, its more revolting features, and to throw a philosophical veil over its grosser deformities. It is the application of a new philosophy to the explication of old dogmas. It is a substitution of modern garments, for its antiquated and decayed robes. There are many enlightened men in the Presbyterian Church, who see clearly that the effort to sustain Calvinism, as it has come down to them, much longer, is hopeless. Hence the attempt to modify and reconstruct it, to give it a milder, a more attractive and rational form. Will the attempt succeed? We think it will not. Calvinism admits of no modification. Moderate Calvinism sounds to us very much like a contradiction in terms. It is a nicely adjusted, balanced, and compacted structure. Remove or change the position of one stone, and the whole tumbles into ruin--not one stone will be left standing upon another. Either our nature is totally depraved or it is not.

If it is not, if it has the least particle or spark, or trace, or motion of goodness about it, or within it, then it is not totally depraved, and Calvinism is false. Either there is an eternal, arbitrary election, or there is not. Either man is utterly incapable of doing anything to effect his salvation, or he is not. There can be no modification, no mingling of elements, no mixing of sweet waters with bitter. It is a stern, unyielding, iron system. It must reign unrivalled, or unconditionally abdicate its throne. Compromise is abhorrent to its nature. The moment it starts in the least from its moorings, it is on high and giddy waves. It is driven by the winds and tossed. It is on storm-vexed seas, where it must wreck and sink, and, as we trust, never to rise."

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"These New-school theologians may, with a world of toil and vexation, rear something, on which they can sit for a while and talk of fate and free-will. But it will not do. It is on the sand, and when the floods come and beat against it, it will fall, and they will find some difficulty in making their way from the ruins. The plant they are so carefully nurturing is feeble and sickly. It has no depth of earth, and when the sun rises with a burning heat, (and it will rise,) it will wither away. Why can they not gain grace and courage enough 'to quit themselves like men?' To come out at once and embrace the truth, pure and simple, lovely and powerful, as it is in Jesus? It will make them free, joyous, and contented."

These testimonies from the friends and the foes of orthodoxy, are closed with the following extract from one of Dr. Dana's Letters to Prof. Stuart.

"Are you not alarmed, by dear sir, at the *entire revolution* which the new theory respecting original sin is introducing into the whole system of Christ doctrine, and Christian practice? Does it not wrest from the Supreme Being the sovereign control over his own world, by denying that he could have excluded sin from his system; by denying, too, that he can exercise any such influence over free moral agents as will effectually secure them from disobedience? Does it not substitute in the place of a *change of heart*, a mere *change of purpose*; a change of which *man* is the author, rather than God? Does it not, while verbally acknowledging the agency of the Holy Spirit in conversion, reduce that agency to a mere *suasive* influence, and deny its direct and efficient control over the heart? Does it not, by discarding the fact of *permanent dispositions*, discard the certainty of the saints' perseverance? Does it not, in the same way, discard that inward, spiritual warfare which is so much the uniform experience of Christians? Does it not subvert the doctrine of election, by resolving it into a mere certainty in the mind of God, whether the sinner will voluntarily turn, or voluntarily persist in impenitence? In a word, does it not divest the Supreme Being of his sovereignty and omnipotence in the work of human salvation, and almost transfer the same attributes to man?

I might speak of those errors of the scheme which are more immediately practical. But I am unwilling to enlarge on so painful a subject. Still, there is one point which is too important to be omitted. The theory in question lays the foundations of all moral

obligation in *self-interest*. It declares that "of all voluntary action, the happiness of the agent, in some form, is the *ultimate end*." It declares that "self-love, or the *desire of happiness*, is the primary cause or reason of all acts of preference or choice, which fix supremely on any object." A most comfortable doctrine this, to every sinner upon earth! For where is the sinner who does not love himself? Where is the sinner who does not desire his own happiness? But what becomes of those passages of Scripture, so continually recurring, which call us off from these low propensities and aims, and which place all real virtue in SUPREME LOVE TO GOD, and REGARD TO HIS GLORY? And what follows, but that the principle in question goes directly to annihilate all moral distinctions; to reduce the good and the bad in the human family to one common level; in a word, to banish not only all piety, but all virtue from the world? It is not too much to say, that a theory embracing this principle, bears instamped on its very front, the deep, indelible brand of error and of falsehood."

THE END

"Appendix," in *A Treatise on the Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin* by H. A. Boardman, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1844). **Note:** The text has not been modified.