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## The Prospect for Christianity.

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That the world is at present passing through a most critical period is a matter of such common observation that one almost shrinks from uttering the fact once more, as from a trite repetition that has been stated *ad nauseam*. The crisis is remarkable because it is not a partial one, affecting only certain portions of the earth, particular peoples, or special pursuits, but it is total, involving all nations and all activities of men. The remotest parts of the world are feeling its effects, and even in secluded hamlets it forms the topic of conversation. To account for this phenomenon it is not sufficient to point to our widely extended and very effective system of communication, which has wiped out distances, and figures time in minutes and seconds instead of months and days as formerly. For these conditions have prevailed for a considerable length of time before the present unrest, without producing critical situations like the present one. It is not the mere fact that people nowadays learn quickly what is happening anywhere, but the nature of what is happening, that affects them so powerfully. Neither does the late World War explain the general feeling of unsettlement that pervades the peoples. The more that gigantic struggle is being studied, the more evident it becomes that the unprecedented conflict is not the cause of the existing crisis, but only a feature of it. The very size of the bloody undertaking, the manner in which it was conducted, but, above all, the fact that after its nominal termination there is no relaxation, but a very palpable increase of the taut relations between all parts of the world, suggests the thought that in the late war a cause or causes, a power or powers of evil have merely *begun* to operate, and the full extent of their working and the exact quality of their aim is still to be revealed. The crisis is only seemingly a political one, nations flying at each other's

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## Hereditary Guilt.

Submitted by request of the Saginaw Valley Pastoral Conference  
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Original sin, according to the Scriptures, denotes two coordinate factors, hereditary guilt and hereditary depravity. The question has been asked whether it is quite correct, in defining original sin, to place the hereditary guilt before the hereditary depravity.

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2) W. H. Johnson in *Princeton Theological Review*, XX, 563.

3) 1, 1585 f.; 5, 888—921. 922—1055; 8, 1172. 1175. 1180; 9, 1782; 11, 1148. 1699. 1709; 12, 165. 1479. 1573. 1608 f., etc.

Would it not be more proper to define original sin primarily as depravity, and secondarily as guilt, because the imputation of Adam's guilt should be regarded as a punishment of the sins committed by Adam's posterity?

In answering this question it must be kept in mind that in God's view the whole human race has sinned in Adam, and that the fall of the human race in Adam is evident from the fact that all men are born wicked and depraved. Since, however, it is very correct to place first the cause and then the effect, it cannot be deemed improper to define original sin to be first hereditary guilt and then hereditary depravity.

The first contention is that in Adam all men have sinned. For this assertion we quote Rom. 5, 12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." It is admitted that the last words, "for that all have sinned," or, "in whom all have sinned," is a *cruce interpretum*. Yet these words can mean only one of two things. They either mean that all men have sinned in and with Adam, or they mean that all men have sinned in consequence of Adam's sin.

If the latter were the meaning of these words, the question would arise how God could permit all men to be born devoid of righteousness, and full of wickedness and concupiscence, prone to sin and evil. Would His justice permit Him to sentence the posterity of Adam to be born in such depravity both of body and soul, if in His sight they had not sinned in and with Adam? It is impossible that God should punish the posterity of Adam for the sin of their forefather, if they were innocent of that sin. No matter, then, how these words of St. Paul are interpreted, they teach either explicitly or implicitly that all have sinned in Adam.

Attention is further called to Rom. 5, 15: "Through the offense of one many be dead." Here a thought similar to that of verse twelve is expressed. Paul here teaches that Adam's sin has caused the death of all his posterity. All must die because one has sinned. Now, death is the punishment of sin. The punishment must be suffered by all. If God has condemned all posterity of Adam for Adam's sin, is it not evident that in His sight all men have sinned in Adam? For the righteous son shall not bear the iniquity of the father. Since all men must suffer the terrible consequence and punishment of Adam's sin, it is evident that Adam's posterity is not righteous, is not innocent of the crime he com-

mitted, but that God regards them as having sinned in and with their progenitor.

Attention is also called to verse eighteen of the same chapter: "Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation." By Adam's sin judgment came upon all men to condemnation. These words plainly say that all men are sentenced to eternal condemnation by the offense of Adam. It is not precluded that men have brought damnation upon themselves also by their own evil deeds, but this verse teaches that all men are under condemnation already by Adam's sin. Now, if judgment is upon all men to condemnation for Adam's sin, then certainly all have in some manner sinned in Adam, or, expressed differently, Adam's guilt is the guilt of all men. Lutheran theologians, *e. g.*, Quenstedt, use the word "imputation" in this connection and say that God "*peccatum Adamiticum justissime illis [the posterity of Adam] ad damnationem imputat.*" Baier, II, 291.

Now follows verse nineteen of Rom. 5: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners." This means that by Adam's sin all men were set down to be, were declared to be, or were made, sinners, as the English Bible renders these words. All were set down to be sinners because in and with Adam all have sinned. The Scripture does not explain in what manner all have sinned against God in Adam or how it was possible. All explanations that Adam was not only the seminal head, but also the moral head of the human family, that his posterity was in his loins, like the oak in the acorn, etc., do not overcome the objections of perverted human reason. "*Sufficit τὸ ὄντι esse revelatum, etsi τὸ πῶς ignoretur.*" Baier, II, 290.

But one might object to the exegesis of this verse that it must not necessarily mean that Adam's sin is the sin of all men. It might rather mean that Adam's sin is only the cause for the sinfulness of his posterity; that all men are made sinners by the disobedience of one man because they all have inherited from him a weakened, corrupted nature and in consequence of this weakened nature, having transgressed God's law, stand before God as sinners. But the unbiased reader cannot but understand St. Paul to mean that all men share in Adam's guilt and sin. Besides, what an injustice it would be on the part of the righteous God to condemn the children of Adam, if they were not guilty with Adam, to be born with a corrupt or weakened nature, and to subject them to all the other evil consequences of their father's guilt both in body

and soul, and even to sentence them to death for Adam's disobedience! Would not that be contrary to Ezek. 18, 20, that the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father? Adam's posterity "*jure, quo pollet summo*" (Quenstedt), according to the highest justice of which the divine Judge is capable, is punished for Adam's guilt because in Adam they themselves have sinned.

Heerbrand, *Baier*, II, 291, asks whether original sin is *proprium an alienum*, our own sin or the sin of another. He answers, it is both. It is a foreign guilt, as we correctly say in hymn 236, 3: "Wie uns nun hat ein' fremde Schuld in Adam all' verhoehnet, also hat auch ein' fremde Huld in Christo all' versoehnet." But it is also properly our own sin; because Adam's sin inheres in us, it is not only imputed unto us as a foreign guilt, but we are born with this sin, it is implanted into our nature, in which it inheres and makes itself evident. We have ourselves in some manner sinned in and with Adam.

This conception underlies St. Paul's statement, Eph. 2, 3: "And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." "By nature," *φύσει*, born under the blaze of God's indignation. St. Paul does not say that by nature there dwells in us a birth-principle of evil, which, if suffered to develop, will bring upon us the wrath of God. But Paul says, *φύσει*, by nature, we were children of wrath. By nature, by our birth, we are guilty before God, for wrath presupposes guilt. As members of the human race we share in the guilt which mankind has heaped upon itself by Adam's fall, and thus we also by nature were children of wrath.

Dogmaticians have distinguished between *imputatio mediata* and *immediata*. To quote Vilmar, *Baier*, II, 291: "Man unterschied hiernach eine *imputatio mediata* = Zurechnung der Schuld wegen der uebergeleiteten Suendhaftigkeit (*defectus* UND *concupiscentia*), und eine *imputatio immediata* = Zurechnung der Suende Adams an und fuer sich. Dieser letzteren, der *imputatio immediata*, gegenueber stellt sich die Frage: Wie kann mir eine fremde Schuld zugerechnet werden? und dieser Frage, so verstanden, kann eine genuegende Beantwortung allerdings nicht zuteil werden." Then Vilmar goes on to say that an *imputatio immediata* would be possible only if one accepted the theory of the preexistence of the soul, which in some manner cooperated in disobeying God's command in Paradise. In reply it must be stated again that the fact is clearly revealed in the Scriptures that in the sight of God all men sinned in and with Adam and share in his punishment,

*imputatio immediata*, though we are not told in what manner it was possible that Adam's posterity sinned contemporaneously with him. What the Bible teaches is this, that all men sinned in and with Adam, *i. e.*, that the sin of Adam is the sin of every human being.

Turning to our *Triglotta*, we find the following references. In the Smalcald Articles, p. 477, 1, we read: "Here we must confess as Paul says in Rom. 5, 11, that sin originated (and entered the world) from one man, Adam, by whose disobedience all men were made sinners, subject to death and the devil. This is called original or capital sin." According to the Smalcald Articles original sin is Adam's sin. To have original sin, then, means to have Adam's sin, to have his guilt, to be under the wrath which he brought upon himself.

Another reference to hereditary guilt we find in the Formula of Concord, p. 781, 1: "Therefore we reject and condemn the teaching that original sin is *only a reatus* or debt on account of what has been committed by another (diverted to us) without any corruption of our nature." Quenstedt quotes in the *Antithesis of Baier*, II, 291, the Arminians, one of whom said: "*In Adamo non sunt lapsi nisi imputatione.*" (In Adam they have fallen only by imputation.) Here the error is rejected that Adam's guilt is imputed to us merely as a foreign guilt. It must be considered as the transgression of the whole human race, which is made to bear the punishment by being born with a corrupt nature.

A like reference is to be found on p. 865: "And first, in opposition to the old and new Pelagians, the following false opinions and dogmas are censured and rejected, namely, that original sin is *only a reatus*, or guilt, on account of what has been committed by another, without any corruption of our nature."

From this it is evident that our Church teaches that original sin denotes hereditary guilt, that is, that in Adam all have sinned, or that Adam's disobedience is the guilt of every member of the human race.

Very correctly we therefore define original sin as being first hereditary guilt and secondly hereditary depravity imposed upon the human race for being guilty with Adam.

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