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Doctrinal Theology.

SOTERIOLOGY.

(Continued.)

JUSTIFICATION.

The chief and foremost benefit of Christ is that perfect righteousness which, by his vicarious atonement, Christ, the Redeemer of mankind, has procured for Adam and all his sinful progeny. *This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*¹⁾ *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*²⁾ *For God hath made him to sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*³⁾

Christ knew no sin. In him there was no sin.⁴⁾ When God made him sin for us, it was by imputation. *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*⁵⁾ Thus, when he suffered and died, *he was wounded for OUR transgression, he was bruised for OUR iniquities.*⁶⁾ Not by a physical act, but by a judicial act of God was Jesus made sin. By the physical, creative act of God Jesus was made *that Holy Thing* which was born of the Virgin.⁷⁾ But while *in* him there was

1) Jer. 23, 6.

2) Rom. 5, 19.

3) 2 Cor. 5, 21.

4) 1 John 3, 5. John 8, 46. Hebr. 4, 15; 7, 26. 27.

5) Is. 53, 6.

6) Is. 53, 5.

7) Luke 1, 35.

Exegetical Theology.

THE PROOF TEXTS OF THE CATECHISM

WITH A

PRACTICAL COMMENTARY.

(Continued.)

THE PURPOSES OF THE LAW.

Ps. 14, 3: *They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

These words comprise a threefold description of all men, not as they are or appear in the opinion or judgment of a human moralist or judge, but as they are and appear in the sight of God. For in the preceding verse the psalmist says, *The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men*, etc. And as God views the children of men, all of them, as he sees them from the throne of righteousness with the searching gaze of his omniscience, what does he find? The answer is given in three statements, the first of which is: *They are all gone aside*, that is, they have left the way of God's commandments. This is said of הַכֹּל, not of some men only, but of *all*, or, *the whole of them*. The next statement asserts the same truth in different and stronger terms: *They are all together become filthy*. The Hebrew word, נִאֲלָח, signifies a state of rottenness which renders things no longer available for their use. This state of thorough depravity is universal, predicated of all men, the whole mass of them, כָּל־אָדָם, like a whole barrel of apples every one of which is rotten to the core. This universality of human sinfulness is once more stated in the words, *There is none that doeth good, no, not one*. Lest any man should con-

sider himself an exception, or though in the sight of men there might be a man of spotless rectitude, this text emphasizes that there is no exception, that all are sinners and none, no, not one, can in the sight of God appear righteous in himself. Thus St. Paul adduces this text in proof of what he has taught in Rom. 1 and 2, that we are all under sin, the Jews being no better than the Gentiles. Rom. 3, 9—12.

Eccl. 7, 20: *There is no just man on earth, that doeth good and sinneth not.*

Righteousness, according to God's commandments, consists in doing that which God has enjoined and avoiding that which God has forbidden. And as the law of God is intended for and binding upon all men, every man should be just and righteous according to the law, doing good and sinning not. But such is the total and universal depravity of mankind, that the very reverse must be acknowledged. In all the world, on all the earth, among all nations, not only in the dens of vice, but also in temples and sanctuaries, there is not one just man, not one that doeth good, not one that sinneth not.

Is. 64, 6: *We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.*

Here again the universality as well as the totality of human depravity is emphatically asserted. The prophet speaks of himself and his hearers or readers, *all* of them without exception, as being unclean before God, to whom he has in the preceding verse said, *Thou art wroth, for we have sinned.* This is universal depravity, including all men. And this depravity is total, every man, of himself, being wholly sinful even where he is rated after what is best in him. The prophet does not say, "Our sins are abominations," but, *Our righteousnesses*, and not only some, but *all* of them, *are as filthy rags.* What Jews and Gentiles would account as virtues are abominations before God, and

even the good works of the regenerate are contaminated with sin, all of them, and would condemn us if we should be judged according to them at the tribunal of divine justice.

Job 14, 4: *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.*

This text teaches that all men are sinful by nature, all, without a single exception. The chapter opens with the words, *Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble*; and, having, in the 3d verse, plaintively referred to the fact that he, too, a woman's son, must face the judgment of God, Job confesses his innate sinfulness in the words of our text. He acknowledges that, even aside from anything he may have to answer for as committed or omitted by him in the course of his days, he must stand abashed before the righteous Judge, being unclean from his mother's womb. It is immaterial whether the form לֹא יֵצֵא , which occurs about twenty times in the Old Testament, be taken as a wish or as a rhetorical question; for the final לֹא אֶחָד , *not one*, either says that the wish can in no wise be fulfilled, or that the question must in all cases be denied.

Phil. 3, 12: *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

The apostle here, as appears more clearly in the subsequent context, especially v. 14, pictures himself as an athlete competing in the race for a prize, $\beta\rho\alpha\beta\epsilon\iota\omega\nu$, which is in view but not yet within his grasp. The prize is the full and perfect conformity with Christ in the life to come. This he has not yet attained; he is not yet perfect, though he is already apprehended of Christ Jesus, a subject in Christ's kingdom, a living member of his spiritual body. Perfection, also in the regenerate, is not of this life, and even the great apostle and servant of Christ is no exception any more than was the servant of God speaking in the following text.

Ps. 143, 2: *Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*

The psalmist is a *servant* of Jehovah. As a servant he has entered upon the performance of his Master's will according to His commandments. If this fulfillment of the will of God were perfect in all its parts, he might declare his readiness to render account to the Master and receive his reward. But the servant of the Lord knows that before Jehovah's awful throne he would be found wanting, and not he alone, but every other man living in this world and time. Hence his prayer and confession. He prays that the Lord would not enter into judgment with him, but deal with him in grace and mercy, vv. 8—12; for in the judgment of God, before whom no man living can be justified, he and all other men must surely be condemned, unless grace and mercy prevail.

James 2, 10: *Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

Law is the expressed will of the lawgiver. The divine law is the unalterable will of God. God is one, and his will is one, and to offend against any point of the divine law is to offend against the one God and his holy will. For, as the subsequent context says, *he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill.* Hence, one transgression of one commandment of God, even during a life of perfect righteousness in all other points, would constitute the transgressor a sinner and ἐνοχος, *guilty*, and damnable before God. A chain is broken, though but one link, and whatever link, have been broken; a garment is soiled, though one sleeve only may have been spattered with filth; and a body is wounded, perhaps to death, though one organ only may have been pierced. Even in a court of human justice a thief is not acquitted because he has not committed murder or arson. And one sin is sin and can never be anything but sin in time and eternity; and *the soul that sinneth, it shall die.* Ezek. 18, 4. 20.

Rom. 3, 20: *By the law is the knowledge of sin.*

The law is here described as the means, *διὰ*, by or *through* which a certain end is achieved, the knowledge of sin, *ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας*. As sin is the transgression of the law, the law only can decide whether an act be sin or not. This is true everywhere. What is a crime in Missouri must be determined by the law, and by the law of Missouri, not by the law of China, which is not law in Missouri. And *where no law is, there is no transgression*. Rom. 4, 15. The divine law is law binding upon all men. It was published so that it can be known to all. The Lawgiver being one and unchangeable, there can be no conflict of laws in his statutes. Hence he who would obtain a knowledge of sin, and not a superficial, but a *thorough knowledge*, *ἐπίγνωσις*, of sin, must not apply traditions of men, man-made precepts or concessions, decisions or decrees of councils or courts, but the infallible law of God. Whatever is a transgression of this law is surely sin, though all the world should justify it. And whatever is not a transgression of this law is certainly not sin, though all the world should condemn it. Thus the law is as a good mirror which reflects the true image of the beholder, neither concealing nor adding blotch or blemish.

Rom. 7, 7: *I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

This text contains a general and a particular statement. The general statement is, *I had not known sin, but by the law*. To know sin is to know that a certain act or state is at variance with the law of God. Though a man may be conscious of an act as such, he cannot, without the law, be cognizant of the sinfulness of the act, or of the sin committed in and by the act. Hence ignorance of the law, though it does not excuse the sinner, certainly excludes the knowledge of sin. Ignorance of the law is, therefore, since

it does not excuse the sinner, a dangerous thing. On the other hand, the law, when known, not only reveals sin as sin, but also draws the sinner's attention to the sinful act and leads him to ponder its significance in the judgment of God. A thorough knowledge of the law is, therefore, a highly needful and commendable thing. All this is exemplified in the particular statement: *For I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.* Here the general truth before stated is applied to a particular commandment of the law. This commandment, though a precept of the moral law, was largely forgotten by Jews and Gentiles, and hence the evil desires of the heart were not known and regarded as evil lusts, as sinful before God and damnable. But here was the plain statute of the law, *Thou shalt not covet*, and the knowledge of this utterance of the holy will of God was to Paul and should be to others the way to the knowledge of evil lust in its damnable sinfulness, just as by the commandments, *Thou shalt not kill*, and, *Thou shalt not steal*, they should know murder and theft as sins and damnable before God. See *ante*, p. 97.

Ps. 119, 9: *Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.*

The text consists of a question and an answer. The psalmist asks, *Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way?* Life is here pictured as a pilgrimage, and a young man's life is a period beset with peculiar dangers of moral defilement, temptations unknown to the child. Owing to his innate sinfulness, the young man will find his way a way of sin from day to day unless it be *cleansed*, that is, unless he sedulously shun and put off whatever *is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts*, Eph. 4, 22, and *cleanses himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* 2 Cor. 7, 1. How is he to do this? The psalmist's answer is, *By taking heed thereto according to thy word.* The word of God which

he has in mind is the word of the law. This we learn from the subsequent context, where, at the same time, he confesses his inability to accomplish this purity of life without assistance from the Lord, and prays for divine succor, saying, *With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Blessed art thou, O Lord; teach me thy statutes.* Vv. 10—12. By continually and prayerfully growing in the knowledge of God's statutes and keeping them ever in his heart he secures to himself the rule of life according to which with the help of God he hopes and desires to cleanse his way.

OF SIN.

1 John 3, 4: *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.*

The apostle would in these words point out the nature of sin. The Greek text is, *Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία.* In the first place, then, he says that every sinful act is also an unlawful act. The Greek *ἀνομία*, like the English *lawlessness*, signifies not merely what is without the law, but what is in violation of the law. The law, *νόμος*, is the expressed will of the lawgiver, and the Lawgiver of the moral law, the violation of which is sin, is God. What the apostle would say is, therefore, that sin is in all cases—*πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν κτλ.*—a violation of the holy will of God as expressed in the law. And this cannot be otherwise; for *sin is the transgression of the law.* The two, *ἁμαρτία* and *ἀνομία*, are simply convertible terms. Everything which is *ἁμαρτία* is also *ἀνομία*, and everything which is *ἀνομία* is also *ἁμαρτία*, and nothing is the one which is not the other. It is sacrilegious arrogance to stamp that sin which is not against the law of God, or to deny that to be sin which God has prohibited in his law. And as every sin is *ἀνομία*, it is in itself damnable before God, no matter how insignificant it may be in the sight of men, or by whom

it may have been committed, whether he be a saint or sot, a king or a slave, a Peter or a Judas; for *whosoever committeth sin*, committeth ἀνομία, a violation of the holy will of God.

1 John 3, 8: *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.*

Whom the apostle would describe in the first part of this verse appears from the preceding verse, in which he says, *He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.* The children of God, who walk after Christ in true righteousness, are the one class of men living in this world. In direct opposition to them there is another class, not ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην, but ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, *he that committeth sin.* Of him the apostle says, he is ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου, *of the devil.* Thus also in v. 10 he distinguishes between τέκνα θεοῦ, *children of God*, and τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου, *children of the devil.* Though not immediately begotten of the devil, yet the remote origin of that wherein and for which they live and which gives them their character, the very fountain-head of sin, lies even beyond the first natural ancestor of the human race. That they are evildoers they have, primarily and originally, ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου, from the devil, ὅτι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὁ διάβολος ἁμαρτάνει, *forasmuch as the devil sins from the beginning.* Man did not sin ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. The beginning of sin was made before the fall of man, by the devil. He was the first origin and originator of sin. Though he too was made, as all the works of God, *very good*, Gen. 1, 31, he, in a manner which we cannot know or understand, set his will against the will of God and, sinning, made the beginning of sin. Then, seducing man to sin, he was also the first cause of the sin of humankind.

Rom. 5, 12: *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.*

The apostle would not here point out the first origin or originator of sin, which was the devil, but the manner in

which sin found its way into the world, the mass of sinful mankind. He does not say, *From one man*, ἐξ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, as he might have said ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου, *from*, or *out of the devil*, but, *By*, or *through one man*, δι' ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου. This one man was Adam, v. 14. For though Eve was first seduced and had sinned before Adam, yet Adam was the natural fountain-head of mankind, also of Eve, who was taken from him, and the progenitor of a sinful progeny bearing his likeness and image, Gen. 5, 3. Thus it was Adam's sin rather than Eve's which was propagated to the later generations of men, even as to him the commandment was given, *Thou shalt not eat of it*, and the threat, *For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*. Gen. 2, 17. To this also the apostle refers in the words, *And death by sin*, death, the wages of sin, death which reigned *from Adam to Moses*, v. 14, and beyond Moses over all generations that have taken their origin from Adam, the sinful father of a sinful race.

Ps. 51, 5: *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

A grave and grievous sin committed by one of God's great saints and servants was the occasion for this psalm. But in his penitential prayer David not only confesses this sin and other actual sins; he acknowledges also the sinfulness of his nature from the first beginnings of his existence. What he says concerning his conception and birth does not refer to a sin similar to that which he himself had committed with Bathsheba; for he was conceived and born in lawful wedlock. Neither would he say that marriage and the begetting of children is in itself impure and sinful; for it is by the plan and ordinance of God that children are begotten and born in wedlock. What he clearly states, emphasizing the statement with הִנֵּה, *Behold*, is that he took his origin from a sinful source, that his very being is, from its beginning, contaminated and permeated with iniquity. And

this he does not plead to exonerate himself or to extenuate his evil acts, but rather to add to his humiliation and the acknowledgment of his utter unworthiness, craving only that God in his grace and mercy would cleanse him. The corruption of his heart is also acknowledged in the petition, *Create in me a clean heart, O God*, v. 10. What he is by his first creation, flesh born of the flesh, is thoroughly unclean to the very core, not only the members but the innermost heart.

John 3, 6: *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

Nicodemus was slow to comprehend how and why a man must be born again to see the kingdom of God, and Jesus endeavors to enlighten him. That which is requisite in order that a man should enter the kingdom of God is not in natural man. Even if he could and would *enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born*, v. 4, such birth would avail him nothing. For it would be a birth like his first birth, flesh being born of the flesh, that is, a corrupt human nature from a corrupt human nature, and, hence, unfit to enter the kingdom of God. Spirit, *the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*, Eph. 4, 24, cannot come from the flesh, in which *dwelleth no good thing*, Rom. 7, 18, but must be born of the Spirit; and this is the new birth.

Gen. 8, 21: *The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.*

When God spoke these words he had before him the few righteous men and women who were saved from the waters of the deluge. At the same time he looked forward to all the generations of men who were to live while the earth should endure. When he had seen the wickedness of man before the flood, and that *every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*, Gen. 6, 5;

he had resolved to destroy man from the face of the earth. Now, after the flood, he saw that the progeny of the second ancestor of mankind to the end of time would again be corrupt by nature, that the hearts of all men would be from their youth fountains of evil from which evil would flow, and that he would find sufficient and abundant cause to destroy the second world as he did the first. Hence the special covenant, of which the bow in the cloud should be the token, that *the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh*. Gen. 8, 21 f.; 9, 14—16.

Rom. 7, 18: *I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.*

These words were written by St. Paul when he was no longer a Pharisee and a persecutor of the church, but an apostle of Christ and *delighted in the law of God after the inward man*, v. 22. Still he complains of serving *with the flesh the law of sin*, v. 25, his flesh, the corrupt nature which he brought into the world, being evil throughout, so that no good thing dwelled therein. Thus we learn that the flesh of the regenerate is no better than that of the ungodly, and that, since flesh is what all men are by nature, and in the flesh of no man any good thing dwells, the natural depravity of man is both universal and total.

Eph. 2, 3: *And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

This text teaches that the original sin, with which all men are by nature contaminated, is really and truly *sin*, whereby the wrath of God is kindled against us and we are liable to the penalty of sin, death and damnation. The apostle describes himself and his readers and other men as being not only children of sin, but *children of wrath*, of God's holiness incensed over the sin that is within us. He does not here refer to the wrath of God aroused by the evil works we have done in our lives, but to the wrath to which

we are subject as a child to an angry father from the very beginning of our existence, not by our works, but *by nature*. When he says, τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς, the word φύσει is in emphasis. He would emphatically state that when we were conceived and born in sin, we were, because of such hereditary and innate sin, already under the wrath of God, guilty and damnable in his sight, we and all other men, as many as are flesh born of the flesh.

Matt. 15, 19: *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.*

The corruption of man's heart is sin, ἁμαρτία. But man is a rational being endowed with conscious will which prompts his acts, and these acts, being prompted by an evil will of an evil heart inclined toward all that is evil, are sins, ἁμαρτία. The plurals, φόνοι, μοιχεῖαι, πορνεῖαι, κλοπαί, *murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts*, are employed to indicate the various acts or cases of murder, theft, adultery, etc. The sinful acts here enumerated are of three kinds, 1, evil thoughts; 2, evil words, as false witness and blasphemies; and 3, evil deeds, as murders, thefts, etc. All these have their origin in the human heart, and every human heart is capable of bringing forth such fruits of the flesh.

James 4, 17: *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

This verse states a general truth which St. James places at the close of a series of more particular admonitions. The meaning is not that sin were committed only by those who knew the law, while ignorance of what is good would excuse us from doing good. Ignorance of the law is nowhere an excuse for transgressing the law. What he would say is akin to his general admonition, *Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves*, ch. 1, 22. God would have us know his will, and not to know it is sin.

But such knowledge alone will not avail; for to know to do good and not to do it is also sin and all the more damnable sin. It is our duty not only to avoid sins of commission, works prohibited in the law; but it is also our duty to beware of sins of omission committed by neglecting or refusing to do that which is good.

Rom. 10, 4: *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

The law says, *This do, and thou shalt live.* But since we are unable to do what the law demands, we cannot by the works of the law enter into life, and the curse of the law is upon us as long as we are under the law. The rule and dominion of the law signifies to every man transgression of the law, or sin, guilt, condemnation, wrath, death, eternal damnation. Christ says, "I have fulfilled the law; this believe, and thou shalt live." Christ signifies to every man who believes in him a perfect vicarious fulfillment of the law; no sin, but righteousness; no guilt, but innocence; no condemnation, but justification; no wrath, but grace and mercy; no death, but life; no damnation, but everlasting blessedness. And thus is Christ, *in negotio salutis*, the end of the law.

A. G.