

three preceding centuries. Chrysostom's works contain many statements to which the Pelagians, or at least the semi-Pelagians, appealed, and not without reason, in support of these doctrines; while Augustine, in defending the doctrines of grace, appealed sometimes to Ambrose, who had been the chief instrument in the hand of God of leading him to the knowledge of the truth, though there is good reason to doubt whether Ambrose's teaching upon these subjects was perfectly uniform and consistent.* It was in the early part of the fifth century that the doctrines of grace were, for the first time, subjected to a full investigation, error being then more openly and explicitly taught, and truth being more satisfactorily defended and illustrated, developed and systematized, than ever before. It is this which stamps so special an importance upon the Pelagian controversy. It is this which sheds so peculiar a glory around the name of Augustine,—a glory which attaches in the same degree to no man whom Christ gave to His church, from the age of the apostles till the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

We see in Augustine what has not unfrequently been noticed in men whom God has made signal blessings to His church, that even before his conversion he was subjected to a course of discipline and training that was not without its use, in preparing him for the work to which he was afterwards to be called: I refer especially to his having been for a good many years involved in the heresy of Manichæism,—a fact which I have no doubt was overruled by God for preserving him from the danger to which men who are called upon to engage in arduous controversy upon difficult and perplexed subjects are so very liable,—that, viz., of leaning to an extreme opposite to that against which they may feel it to be their duty at the time to contend. Manichæism may be regarded as, in some respects, an opposite extreme to Pelagianism, as the former implied a sort of fatalism, and the latter exalted unwarrantably the natural powers of man. It has, indeed, been alleged by Pelagians, both in ancient and in modern times, that Augustinianism, or Calvinism,—for they are in substance the same,—is tainted by some infusion of Manichæan error; and it has been asserted, that this is to be traced to Augustine retaining some leaven of his old Manichæan principles: but the general experience of mankind shows that this theory is most improbable,

* Neander's General Church History, vol. iv., p. 299.

and proves that it is much more likely that a man who had, deliberately and from full conviction, renounced a system of error, pervaded throughout by one uniform and peculiar character, should, in place of retaining and cherishing any of its distinctive principles, be rather apt to run into the opposite extreme. Augustine, assuredly, did not run into the opposite extreme to Manichæism—else he would not have made such strenuous opposition to Pelagianism; but neither, in opposing Pelagianism, was he tempted to go to the opposite extreme of Manichæism, as he might probably,—according to the tendencies which controversialists too often manifest,—have been led to do, had he not previously sounded the depths and subtleties of Manichæism, and been led decidedly and deliberately to reject it. There would probably have been some better ground for the charge of Manichæism, which has often, without foundation, been adduced against Augustine, had he not both embraced and renounced this heresy before he was called upon to engage in the Pelagian controversy; but as matters stand, it can be fully established that, in opposing the Pelagian heresy, he has avoided all tendency to run into the Manichæan extreme, and been enabled to keep, with wonderful accuracy, in regard to all the essential features of the controversy, the golden mean of scriptural truth.

The founders of Pelagianism—men who have had few followers in the extent to which they carried their views, except the Socinians and Rationalists of modern times—were Pelagius, Cœlestius, and Julian. The two former were monks, but, as was usually the case with monks at this period, they were laymen and not clergymen. Julian was Bishop of Eclanum, a small village in Italy, near Capua; for even in the fifth century many villages still had bishops. Pelagius was a native of Britain; and Cœlestius, too, is supposed to have been a countryman of our own, though the evidence in regard to him is not very conclusive. Jerome, who was always remarkable for the virulence with which he assailed his opponents, never being able to see any good quality in them, speaks with the utmost contempt of Pelagius and Cœlestius; but Augustine, who was, after his conversion, as highly exalted above the generality of the fathers of his age in the personal excellence of his character, as he was in ability and knowledge of divine truth, speaks very respectfully both of their talent and of the general character which they had sustained. They seem to

have broached their errors at Rome about the year 411, and to have afterwards visited Africa and the East. They met with no countenance in Africa, where Augustine's influence was very powerful, and their doctrines were condemned in several African councils, which were held most of them at Carthage. Pelagius met with more favour in the East, chiefly in consequence of the prevalence of Origen's views, which were akin in some respects to his own; and at a council held to examine his doctrines at Diospolis, or Lydda, in Palestine, he was acquitted of the charge of heresy, though there is reason to believe that this result was brought about chiefly by his concealing and explaining away his opinions, and by his renouncing and anathematizing some statements which had been made by Cœlestius, and in which there is good ground to believe that Pelagius himself really concurred, though there was not at that time any evidence to bring them home to him. Innocent, Bishop of Rome, condemned the new doctrines; but Cœlestius afterwards, by skill and cunning in explaining and glossing over his statements, managed to impose upon the ignorance and simplicity of his successor Zosimus, who publicly pronounced him orthodox,—a judgment, however, which he was afterwards induced to retract by the expostulations of Augustine and the African bishops. These different transactions have occasioned much difficulty to the defenders of Papal infallibility, who usually allege in cases of this sort,—as, for example, in that of Pope Liberius, who subscribed an Arian creed, and Pope Honorius, who advocated Monothelism, and was anathematized in consequence as a heretic by the sixth œcumenical council,—that they never really believed the heresies which they taught, but only professed them, either from some misapprehension, or through the force of temptation, in order to avoid persecution, which, it seems, are not inconsistent with their being fully qualified to be infallible guides and rulers of the church. The Pelagian controversy was conducted chiefly in Africa and the West, and did not attract much attention in the East, where the bishops generally were engaged in discussing the errors broached by Apollinaris, Nestorius, and Eutyches.* The third general council, held at Ephesus in 431, which condemned Nestorius, condemned also

* Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, though writing the history of the period, do not even mention it.

Pelagius, Cœlestius, and Julian; and thus the church in general at this time may be said to have condemned Pelagianism, and to have sanctioned the views of Augustine, though it is deserving of remark, that, in the proceedings of the Council of Ephesus, there is merely a general condemnation of the doctrines taught by Pelagius, Cœlestius, and Julian, without any formal declaration of the orthodox doctrine upon the subject in opposition to their errors, or even a statement of what the specific errors were which they had taught. Augustine laboured for about twenty years, with all the powers of his mind, and with unwearied zeal and assiduity, in opposition to the errors of Pelagius; writing many books upon the subject, most of which have come down to us, and exerting his influence in every other way to prevent the spread of heresy. The Lord was pleased to call him to his rest in the year 430, while he was engaged in writing a book against Julian, which has come down to us in an imperfect state, as he left it, and without affording him the satisfaction of witnessing the triumph of sound doctrine, and the condemnation of its opponents in the General Council of Ephesus.

Pelagius, and his immediate followers, Cœlestius and Julian, taught openly and explicitly that man's moral character had received no injury from the fall, and that men were born now with as much ability to do the will of God, and to discharge all the obligations incumbent upon them, as Adam; and, in consequence, they denied the necessity of divine grace, or of any special divine agency or influence upon men, unless it might be for the purpose of enabling them to do more easily that which, however, they were able to do, though less easily, without it, and which, in their estimation, was nothing less than attaining to perfection in holiness in this life. These doctrines are so palpably inconsistent, not only with many particular statements, but with the whole scope and substance of Scripture, that they did not gain much support in the church; and after the decision of the Council of Ephesus, they seem to have almost wholly disappeared.

Pelagius and his immediate followers do not seem to have called in question the doctrine of the Trinity, or any of the scriptural doctrines more immediately connected with it; and yet it is very manifest that modern Socinians and Rationalists are the only consistent Pelagians. When men reject what Pelagius rejected, they are bound in consistency to reject *everything* that is peculiar and

distinctive in the Christian system as a remedial scheme. Upon Pelagian principles, there is no occasion for, and really no meaning in, a Saviour, an atonement, a Holy Spirit. No evil has befallen our race, and there is no occasion for a remedy, especially for such a remedy as the Bible has been generally regarded as unfolding. Augustine, through God's blessing, put down this unscriptural, inconsistent, and cowardly scheme of heresy; and it was not revived until after the Reformation, when it appeared in the bolder and more consistent form of Socinianism. There are, however, as we have said, powerful tendencies in human nature, leading men to over-estimate their own moral powers and capacities, and to think lightly of the necessity and importance of divine grace,—of God's special agency; and while, on the one hand, Pelagius' views met with little countenance, Augustine's, on the other, met with a good deal of opposition. An intermediate scheme was devised, which has passed under the name of semi-Pelagianism, and which, whether bearing that name or not, has almost always prevailed to a considerable extent in the professedly Christian church, especially when true piety was in a feeble or declining condition; and has comprehended men of very different characters, and been held in conjunction with other doctrines, approaching more or less nearly to the scriptural standard. Semi-Pelagianism, from its very nature, bears a character of great indefiniteness. It admits original sin in some sense; *i.e.*, it admits that man's moral nature is more or less corrupted in consequence of the fall, and that special divine assistance was more or less necessary, in order to the attainment of those things which accompany salvation. These intermediate and indefinite views, resembling very much the doctrines which have been held generally by Arminians in modern times, were broached during Augustine's lifetime, and thus afforded him an opportunity of directing against *them* the same great definite scriptural doctrines which he had wielded with so much ability and success against Pelagianism. The contest was carried on after his death, on the side of truth, by Prosper and Fulgentius; but though semi-Pelagianism was never formally approved of by the church, and was very explicitly and formally condemned by a Provincial Council of France, the second Council of Orange, Concilium Arausicanum, in 529, it prevailed practically to a considerable extent till the period of the Reformation.

Augustine has had the peculiar honour assigned to him, by the great Head of the church, of having been the first to develop, in a systematic order, and in their right connection with each other, the great doctrines taught in the word of God concerning man's lost and ruined condition by nature; the gracious agency of God in the conversion and sanctification of sinners; and the true cause or source of all the effects thus produced, wherever they are produced, in His own sovereign good pleasure and eternal purpose,—having mercy on whom He would have mercy, and having compassion on whom He would have compassion; and he was thus enabled to render most important services to the cause of truth and righteousness in all succeeding generations. There is indeed much reason to believe that no inconsiderable portion of the piety that existed in the church from the time when he flourished till the Reformation,—a period of above one thousand years,—was instrumentally connected, more or less directly, with his influence and writings. We may apply the same statement to almost everything like piety that has ever been found in connection with the Church of Rome, including what is certainly to the eye of a Christian by far the brightest spot in the history of that apostate communion,—*viz.*, the Port-Royalists, and the other Jansenists of France in the seventeenth century.

Augustine, indeed, eminently as he was furnished by the great Head of the church both with gifts and graces for defending and promoting divine truth, is not by any means an infallible judge, to whom we can securely trust. God has never given to any uninspired man or body of men, to rise thoroughly and in all respects above the reach of the circumstances in which they have been placed, and the influences to which they have been subjected; and Augustine was certainly involved to a considerable extent in some of the corrupt and erroneous views and practices which in his time were already prevailing widely in the church. There are, it must be admitted, some of the corruptions of Popery, the germs of which at least, though not fully developed, are to be found in his writings. But the great defect with which he is chargeable is, that he seems to have had no very clear or accurate views of the great doctrine of justification by faith. He did not accurately understand the meaning of justification as a forensic or judicial term, as distinguished from sanctification; and he seems to have to some extent confounded them together, as the Church

of Rome still does. It could not be, indeed, that a man of Augustine's undoubted and eminent piety, and with so deep a sense as he had of human depravity and of God's sovereignty in determining man's character and condition, could have been resting upon any works or merits of his own for salvation, and therefore he must practically and in heart have been resting upon Christ alone; and this general statement must have been true of many others besides him in the early and middle ages, who had obscure or erroneous views upon this subject. But he had certainly not attained to any such knowledge of God's word in regard to this matter, as would have enabled him to give a very accurate or consistent exposition of the reason or ground of his hope. I formerly had occasion to explain, that at a very early period in the history of the church, the scriptural doctrine of justification became obscured and lost sight of, and was never again revived in all its fulness and purity until the Lord raised up Luther as His instrument in effecting that important result. The early fathers soon began to talk in an unscriptural and mystical way about the objects and effects of the sacraments; and at length they came to talk of baptism as if it not only signified and represented, but actually conferred, and conferred invariably, both the forgiveness of sins and the renovation of men's moral natures. Augustine knew too much of the word of God, and of the scheme of divine truth, to go thoroughly into such views as these; but he certainly had such notions of the nature and effects of baptism, and of its connection with the forgiveness of sins, as to lead him to some extent to overlook and throw into the background, if not to pervert, the scriptural doctrine of justification by faith alone. The subject of baptism entered largely into his controversy with the Pelagians,—he adducing the baptism of infants for the remission of sins as a proof of original sin, and they regarding it, like the modern Socinians, merely as the appointed rite or ceremony of outward admission into the communion of the visible church; and though he was right in the main in the use and application he made of baptism in opposition to the Pelagian denial of original sin, yet he showed very strikingly how much he was perverted by erroneous and exaggerated views of the nature, objects, and importance of external ordinances, by broadly and unequivocally laying down the doctrine that all infants dying unbaptized are consigned to everlasting misery,—a doctrine which is

still generally taught in the Church of Rome. The Pelagian controversy, as conducted in Augustine's time, embraced a great variety of topics,—taking in, indeed, more or less fully nearly all the leading doctrines of Christianity, except the Trinity and the atonement; and these were not comprehended, just because the original Pelagians had not the boldness and consistency of modern Socinians in following out or developing their own principles. Forbes, in his *Instructiones Historico-Theologicæ*, has enumerated twenty-six topics, which were controverted between Augustine and his opponents; but they are all reducible, as to their main features, to a few general heads,—such as Original Sin, and Free-will; Grace, or Divine Agency in the conversion and sanctification of sinners; Predestination, and the Perseverance of Saints,—and under these heads we propose very briefly to advert to them.

Let me again remark, before proceeding to advert to these topics, that the permanent value of the labours and writings of Augustine in the Pelagian controversy, lies not mainly or chiefly in his having exposed, and through God's blessing put down, Pelagianism in the gross form in which it was at first propounded, and in which it is now held by Socinians and Rationalists, but in his having brought out the clear and definite doctrines of God's word, so as at one and the same time to refute and exclude not only Pelagianism, but also what has been designated semi-Pelagianism; and thus to furnish an antidote to all the numerous attempts which have since been made to exalt unduly the power of man in spiritual things, without wholly superseding the necessity of divine grace, and in this way to share the glory of the salvation of sinners between the saved and the Saviour. This consideration obviously suggests, that in the brief and imperfect notice which alone we can give of this important controversy, we must confine ourselves chiefly to the statement of those great scriptural truths which Augustine so fully unfolded and so ably defended, and which strike at the root of all the errors which have been held upon these subjects, either in ancient or in modern times, and whether in a grosser or in a more mitigated form.

Sec. II.—Depravity—Original Sin.

That branch of Christian doctrine, which is now frequently called *Anthropology*, proposes to answer the question, What is

man in his moral and spiritual character and capacities; in his relations to God and to eternity? So far as the question respects merely the actual features and constituent elements of man's moral nature, there is no incompetency or impropriety in men looking into their own hearts, and surveying their own lives, in order to obtain materials for answering it; but, as God knows what is in men better than they do themselves, it is also quite reasonable that they should receive with implicit submission whatever He may have been pleased to reveal to them in His word regarding it. The question then is, What does God in His word make known to us with respect to men's actual moral character, and spiritual relations and capacities? This, like every other question in Christian theology, taking the word in its widest sense, should be answered by an exact investigation of the true meaning of the various statements of God's word which bear upon it.

It is surely abundantly evident in general, that the representation given us in Scripture of the actual moral character and spiritual capacities of men, as they come into the world, and grow up in it,—of their relation to God, and of the *tendency* of all this, in its bearing upon their eternal destiny,—is not such as is fitted to lead us to entertain any very exalted conceptions of our own worth and our own powers. The word of God surely represents men—all men—as not only actual transgressors of God's laws, and therefore justly liable to all the consequences of transgression, whatever these may be, but as having also a decided bias or proneness to transgress God's law as an actual feature of their moral nature, from which they cannot by their own strength emancipate themselves, and which renders necessary some special interposition of God, if they are ever to be delivered from it. Those who are, from whatever cause, averse to receive *this* view of the actual moral character and condition of man, have been accustomed, besides attempting to explain away the statements of Scripture, in which it seems to be very plainly taught, to have recourse to the considerations universally conceded, that man did not possess this moral character when he came forth at first from the hand of his Creator—that this was not the character of our first parents when they were created; and then to assert that there is no evidence that man's character has been changed—that our moral character and capacities are different from what those of Adam were. Their opponents, though wishing to rest mainly, in the first

instance,—as the proper ground of their cause,—upon the direct Scripture proof of universal native moral corruption, have no objection to follow them in that direction; being confident that the scriptural representation of the effects of Adam's first sin upon himself and upon his posterity,—the scriptural evidence that in connection with Adam's first sin, and in some way as a consequence of it, an important moral deterioration has been introduced into the human race,—only corroborates and illustrates the views they have been led to take of the import of those scriptural statements which speak directly and immediately of the actual character of all men as they come into the world, and are found there. That Adam sinned against God—that thereby he not only incurred the guilt of transgression, but became deteriorated in his own moral character, and that, in consequence, all his posterity have also become to some extent deteriorated in *their* moral character and capacities, so that they do not now, in fact, bring with them into the world a moral character, a capacity of obeying God's law, equal to what Adam originally possessed, or to what, so far as we know, they would have had, had he not fallen—has been, as a general position, admitted by almost all who have professed to believe in the authority of the sacred Scriptures, except the original Pelagians and the modern Socinians. We need not dwell upon this, but proceed to advert to what is the whole truth upon this subject, as set forth in Scripture and maintained by Augustine.

In considering what is man's actual moral character and capacity, we are investigating a matter of fact; we are seeking, directly and primarily, an answer to the question, What man, in these respects, *is*? And we are not called upon, in the first instance, to take into account any questions that may be raised as to the origin or source, the cause or *rationale*, of what may be found to attach to men, or to be truly predicable of them all in their present actual condition. We might be able to ascertain, with accuracy and precision, what is the actual moral condition and capacity of men, even though we were unable to give any very definite account or explanation of how this state of things had been brought about; and it is desirable that, in seeking to understand this whole subject, and to estimate the amount and validity of the evidence bearing upon it, we should distinguish between these two questions. The difficulties attaching to an

investigation of the origin and the reason of the actual ungodliness and depravity of human nature, have been perhaps too much allowed to affect the proof and the impression of its actual existence as a feature of men's moral condition.

There is distinct and abundant scriptural evidence, bearing directly and immediately upon the question of what man is, and is capable of doing in a moral point of view, independently of any information given us in Scripture concerning the origin or cause of the sad realities of the case. Were men really convinced, upon scriptural grounds, that they do all, in point of fact, bring with them to the world hearts which, when estimated in the light of God's law and of our obligations, are indeed deceitful above all things and desperately wicked—that in us, *i.e.*, in our flesh or natural character, there dwelleth no good thing—that until men become the subjects of renewing and sanctifying grace, the imaginations of the thoughts of their hearts are only evil and that continually,—they would feel that they are not called upon in right reason to attach, in the first instance, so much weight as is often done to the determination of the questions that may be started as to the manner and circumstances in which this condition of things may have been brought about, and the way in which it is to be explained and vindicated. It would then stand very much upon the same footing as many other things, the existence and reality of which are established by competent and satisfactory evidence appropriate to the case, but the causes or reasons of which are involved in darkness and difficulty; whereas it is too much the practice, in discussing this subject, to burden the consideration of the great primary question, What is the true character of man's moral nature, as a matter of fact, or an actual feature of what man is? with all the additional difficulties attaching to the questions of how he came to be so ungodly and depraved as he appears to be, and of how the fact that he comes into the world possessed of such a moral character, can be vindicated from the charge of making God the author of sin, and destroying man's responsibility. The questions as to the original moral character of our first parents,—the effects of their first sin upon their own moral character,—the identity of the moral character which all men now have, with that which became theirs after they had sinned,—and the connection between their moral character, as fallen, and that of their posterity;—all these questions stand to the question, of what is now the actual moral

character of men, merely in the position of explanations of the actual fact or state of the case,—accounts of the way in which it originated, and may be defended. And it is of some importance, in order to rightly appreciating the evidence—the *rationes decidendi*—that this distinction should be kept in view.

With respect to the subject of guilt, as distinguished from depravity, the bearing of the first sin of Adam has a somewhat closer and more direct connection with the actual condition of man; for, according to the general doctrine of orthodox Calvinistic divines, the guilt of Adam's first sin, imputed to his posterity, is directly a part of the guilt which actually attaches to them, and forms a constituent element of one important feature of their actual condition,—*viz.*, their guilt, their *reatus*, their just liability to punishment, including of course, from the nature of the case, the grounds on which that liability rests. But, as we have already explained, neither guilt, in its proper sense (*reatus*), on the one hand, nor justification in its proper sense, as simply deliverance from guilt or liability to punishment, and acceptance, on the other, entered directly into the original Pelagian controversy, as it was managed in the time of Augustine. It was ungodliness or depravity, and its bearing upon men's actual capacity to do the will of God, and to discharge their obligations, that was then mainly discussed; and it is with that, therefore, at present that we have chiefly to do. The bearing of the first sin of Adam upon his posterity, and generally the connection subsisting between him and his descendants, was indeed discussed between Augustine and his opponents; but, in accordance with the distinction which we have just explained, it was not directly, as if the guilt of his first sin was a portion of the guilt actually attaching to them, but only indirectly, in so far as his first sin and its immediate consequences afforded some explanation of the origin or ground of the deep-seated and pervading depravity or ungodliness, which Scripture and experience unite in proclaiming to be an actual feature of the moral character of all men.

Augustine was enabled to see and unfold, with a very considerable measure of clearness and accuracy, the great truth which has since been more fully developed and illustrated in defence of Calvinistic principles,—*viz.*, that Adam was constituted by God the representative and federal head of his posterity, so that his trial or

probation was virtually and in God's estimation, according to the wise and just constitution or arrangement which He had made,—and which certainly, to say the least, cannot be proved to have been unjust or unfavourable to his posterity,—the trial or probation of the human race; and that thus the transgression of Adam became, in a legal and judicial sense, and without any injustice to them, *theirs*, so that they were justly involved in its proper consequences. If it be indeed the actual fact that men come into the world with ungodly and depraved natures, which certainly and invariably, until they are changed, produce transgressions and shortcomings of God's law—actual violations of moral obligations—then, assuredly, the principle that Adam was constituted, and thereafter was held and regarded by God, as the representative and federal head of his posterity, so that they sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression, is the only one that has ever been propounded which makes even an approach towards affording an explanation of this important fact,—viz., that men do come into the world with their whole moral nature corrupted, and thoroughly perverted, so far as God and His law are concerned. If men are not satisfied with this explanation, so far as it goes, it is their business to devise or suggest a better. But, in place of impartially considering this explanation, which the statements of Scripture plainly enough indicate, and in place of attempting to give any other more satisfactory explanation of a fact which appears in itself to be well established, the more common process is to deny the fact altogether, or to explain it away,—*i.e.*, either to deny that men bring with them into the world an ungodly and depraved moral nature, or to represent the ungodliness and depravity, which may be admitted in some sense to attach to it, to be insufficient to affect materially their relation to God, and, without divine interposition, their future destiny; and to be thus scarcely important enough to stand much in need of explanation, as not presenting any very serious difficulty either in speculation or in reality.

All this contributes to illustrate the observation we have made, as to the propriety and importance of first of all ascertaining, if possible, how the actual matter of fact stands, that men who are opposed to orthodox views may be deprived of the unfair advantage of shuffling between the fact and its cause,—the thing itself, and its origin or reason. Let the question be distinctly put, and let it be fairly investigated, until, if possible, a deliberate and

decided conclusion is come to: Do men, or do they not, bring with them into the world ungodly and depraved natures? And if they do, have we any practical test or standard of the strength, efficacy, and consequences of this ungodliness or depravity, which actually, and in fact, attaches to them as a feature of their moral character? When the matter of fact is once ascertained, it will then be proper to consider, if it seem necessary, both, on the one hand, how it originated and how it may be explained; and, on the other, to what conclusions, theoretical and practical, it may lead. When the matter is viewed in this light—when the question is thus considered by itself, and in the light of its direct and appropriate evidence—there seems to be no very great difficulty in coming to a decided determination regarding it.

There are surely many sufficiently plain statements in Scripture which assure us that men have all by nature,—*i.e.*, as they actually come into the world, and until some important change is effected upon them,—a bias, proneness, or tendency to disregard God, to neglect the duties which He has imposed upon them, and to break His laws. Experience, or an actual survey of the history and condition of the human race, fully confirms this doctrine of Scripture, and shows that this tendency is universal,—extending to all men,—and is so strong and powerful as never in any instance to be overcome by the unaided efforts of men themselves, or by any combination of external circumstances; or, to adopt the language of Jonathan Edwards, in his great work on Original Sin, “that all mankind constantly in all ages, without fail in any one instance, run into moral evil,” and “that, consequently, all mankind are under the influence of a prevailing effectual tendency in their nature to sin and wickedness.” There are, indeed, many men who do not seem to be at all aware of this tendency to sin as a feature in their character, and not a few even who openly deny it, and appeal to their own consciousness to disprove it. This, however, is no sufficient argument against the reality and universality of the alleged tendency; for it *may be*, and the Scripture plainly enough indicates that *it is*, one feature or result of this very tendency itself, and of its immediate consequences, to render men blind and insensible to its own existence. Many men, who once disbelieved and opposed this doctrine, have come to be firmly persuaded of its truth; while none who ever really and intelligently believed it, have ever been brought to re-

ject it; and there are few men whose consciousness, if allowed full and fair scope, and subjected to a skilful cross-examination upon some materials which the word of God furnishes, would not be brought to render some testimony, more or less explicit, to its truth. In the very nature of this doctrine, or rather of the fact which it announces, it is very manifest that men are imperatively called upon to ascertain whether it be true, and to be familiar with the grounds on which their conviction of its truth is based. And when this conviction is once reached, then is the proper time to investigate both its origin and its results—its causes and its consequences—taking care, however, that neither the difficulties and perplexities that may attend an investigation of its origin or cause, nor the alarming consequences that may flow from it, when practically applied and followed out, shall be allowed to shake the conviction in regard to the actual matter of fact,—this feature of man's moral character, which has been satisfactorily established by competent and appropriate evidence.

Now the Scripture, as we have mentioned, does give us some explanation concerning its origin and source, though certainly not such as to remove every difficulty, and to render the subject in its principles perfectly level to our comprehension; and the substance of what the Scripture makes known to us upon this point was much more fully and accurately brought out by Augustine in his controversy with the Pelagians, than ever it had been before, and has been already briefly explained. No other reasonable explanation of the fact has ever been given,—we might say, has ever been attempted. Men have attempted to explain the fact of the universal prevalence of *actual* sin among mankind, without referring it to a proneness or tendency to sin, which men now bring with them into the world, and which constitutes an actual feature in their moral character; but for this proneness or tendency itself operating universally and certainly, when once admitted or found to be an actual reality, no other explanation has ever been proposed. Some men, indeed, have stopped short with the fact itself, received upon scriptural authority, without seeking, or even admitting, any explanation of its origin or cause; in other words, they have held the fact of the actual and entire corruption and depravity of human nature, without receiving or taking into account the federal headship of our first parent—the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity—or its derivation in any proper

sense from Adam and his first transgression. This raises the question, whether or not the Scripture gives any countenance to the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity; and whether, if it does, this principle does anything towards explaining the fact of the universal corruption and depravity of human nature. Augustine maintained and proved that Adam's sin involved all his posterity in this moral corruption and depravity, and did so, because it was held or reckoned as theirs; although, as has been already explained, he did not apply the imputation of Adam's first sin in the twofold aspect in which it has been commonly presented by Calvinistic divines,—as the ground at once of a portion of the guilt or *reatus* which attaches to them, and as, at the same time, affording some explanation of their universal actual moral depravity,—but only in the latter of these aspects. God did not create man with this prevailing proneness or tendency to sin. It must have been in some way the result of transgression or disobedience. The only act of disobedience or transgression to which it can be ascribed, or with which it can be supposed to be penally connected—and the connection must have been of a penal character—is that of our first parents; and the only way in which that transgression could operate upon us, so as to affect our moral character, is by its being imputed to us, or held and accounted as ours. This, again, receives its explanation from the principle that God constituted Adam the representative or federal head of mankind, so that his trial was actually, and in a judicial sense, the trial of the human race,—and his fall and sin the fall and sin of all his posterity.

Had nothing further been revealed to us in Scripture than the mere fact that all men have, and bring with them into the world, ungodly and depraved natures, it would have been our duty to have received this upon God's authority, though He might have given us no explanation whatever of it, and though we might have been utterly unable to devise any; and even as matters stand, our *first* and most *important* duty in regard to this subject is just to ascertain whether this be so, in point of fact, or not. But the Scripture does plainly trace the fact which it asserts of the universal corruption and depravity of man's nature, to our connection with Adam, and to the first sin of our first parent, and does contain plain enough indications that this connection is based upon a constitution, arrangement, or covenant, which God made,—which

is in itself perfectly equitable,—and in virtue of which Adam's trial or probation was to be the trial or probation of the whole human race. This is information given us in Scripture, in addition to the making known the mere fact of the universal prevalence of actual ungodliness and depravity as a feature of human nature, and is to be received and submitted to simply as being revealed; while, at the same time, there is no great difficulty in seeing that this additional information does throw *some* light upon the important fact with which it is connected, or does contribute something towards explaining it. The subject is, indeed, still a mysterious one, and we have no right to expect that we should fully comprehend it; but the statements which we have briefly explained, can, we think, be all established, with more or less clearness or certainty, from the word of God. They exhaust the information which is given us there upon the different points involved in this matter, and they form a compact and intelligible scheme, which unfolds the whole subject in such a way that each part corroborates and illustrates the other.

The difficulties connected with what seems to be taught in Scripture, as to the bearing of Adam's first sin upon his own moral character, and that of all his descendants, and with the alleged imputation of that sin to his posterity, should not in reason affect our investigation of the question, as to what the actual moral character of mankind is, or the decision to which we may come regarding it. The view of the origin and cause of the moral depravity of man's nature, which is plainly intimated in Scripture, does assuredly not make the great fact itself more incredible or improbable, or weaken the force of the evidence on which it rests. And it is only when the fact is fully established, that men are warranted to investigate into its origin or cause. It is then only that they will be likely to enter upon this investigation with a due measure of impartiality and diligence; and when due impartiality and diligence are employed, men not only will not find, in difficulties that may be connected with the scriptural representation of the origin and cause of this great fact, any ground for doubting the reality of the fact itself, established upon its own proper evidence; but they will see that the scriptural explanation of the fact, though it may not remove every difficulty, does tend in no inconsiderable degree to throw light upon it,—that, when the whole of what the Scripture teaches upon the subject is viewed

in combination, it is all fitly framed together, and that the different branches of the great general doctrine upon this point afford mutual strength and support to each other.

So much for the retrospect, or looking back from the fact established, or assumed to be so, of the moral corruption or depravity of human nature, to its source or cause. Let us now briefly advert to the prospect, or looking forward to the consequences that result from it. In the Pelagian controversy, as understood in Augustine's time, the consequences of the fall were viewed chiefly, not in their connection with guilt, as rendering necessary, if men were to be saved, some provision for securing pardon and acceptance; but in their connection with depravity, as rendering necessary some provision for changing men's natures, and as in some measure determining the nature and character of the provision that was needful. And here the principal and primary question amounts in substance to this: Is this corruption or depravity, attaching to all men as an actual feature of the moral nature which they bring with them into this world, total or partial? If it be only partial, then man still has by nature something about him that is really good, in the proper sense of the word,—something that is really in accordance with the requirements of God's law, that enables him to do something in the way of really discharging the obligations which lie upon him as a creature of God, and of effecting, or at least aiding to effect, by his own strength and efforts, his own entire deliverance from its influence. If, on the other hand, the corruption or depravity which attaches to man's moral nature be total, then it follows that the positions now referred to are wholly unfounded, and that statements directly the reverse may justly be made with regard to men's qualities and capacities, so far as concerns their relation to God and His laws, their fitness to discharge the obligations which lie upon them, and their ability to exert themselves any real influence upon their deliverance from depravity, and their meetness for heaven.

Our Confession of Faith says,—and the word of God fully proves it,—that in virtue of this corruption or depravity, which attaches to all men by nature, they are “dead in sin, and *wholly* defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body,” and that they are “thereby utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil.” This, and nothing less, Scripture and experience concur in showing to be

the real import and amount of the corruption which, in fact, attaches to man's moral nature; and while the direct and immediate result of this truth, proved or admitted, is, that men should, in the belief of it, be fully aware of, and should constantly realize, their own utter worthlessness and helplessness in regard to all spiritual and eternal things, and cherish a frame of mind and heart corresponding to this awful reality, which either now attaches, or did once attach, to every one of them,—its more general and extended importance, both theoretically and practically, is to be seen in its bearing upon the question of what is the nature, character, and source of the provision that may be adequate and needful for removing it. It is here, of course, that the subject of original sin and human depravity connects with that of divine grace, or the special gracious agency of God, in converting and sanctifying men,—a subject which formed, perhaps, the most prominent topic of discussion in the controversy between Augustine and the Pelagians. Here, too, comes in the important and difficult subject of free-will; about the precise mode of stating, defending, and applying which, there has been considerable diversity of sentiment, even among those who in the main agreed in the whole substance of what they believed regarding the moral nature and spiritual capacity of fallen man. Indeed, the subject of the freedom or bondage, the liberty or servitude, of the human will,—*i.e.*, of the will of men as they are, as they come into the world, with a corrupt and depraved moral nature,—may be regarded as forming, in some sense, the connecting link between the doctrine of original sin, and that of God's grace in the conversion of sinners. The doctrine of man's *total* depravity implies, or immediately leads to, that of the actual servitude or bondage of the human will. And this, again, when once proved, would be sufficient of itself to establish the doctrine of God's special gracious agency as the ultimate source, and only real cause of, all that is truly good in man, even although this latter doctrine had not been so clearly and fully established by the express declarations of Scripture. It is in this connection, *and in this connection alone*, that the servitude or bondage of the human will was asserted by Augustine, and, what is much more important, is asserted in our Confession of Faith. The Confession, after laying down the general principle about the natural liberty of the will of man already quoted, and asserting that "man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to

will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God, but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it," proceeds in these words: "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin; is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto."

I cannot enter upon any detailed discussion of this subject, though I will afterwards return to it; but I would just remark, that I am by no means satisfied that any other doctrine of necessity—any other view of the bondage or servitude of the human will—than that which represents it as implied in, or deduced from, the moral depravity which attaches to all men, as an actual feature of their character, can be fully established, either from Scripture or reason. The actual inability of men to will or to do what is really good,—and this is the only necessity under which they lie that is of any material practical importance,—seems in Scripture to be always connected with, or deduced from, *not* their mere position as the creatures of God's hand, and the subjects of His moral government,—although, of course, they are *in these characters* wholly subject at all times, and in all circumstances, to His guidance and control,—not any general laws which He has impressed upon His intelligent creatures, or upon the human mind as such, or on its power of volition, or other faculties or operations; *but* it seems to be connected with, or deduced from, that thorough ungodliness, or entire moral corruption, which attaches to the nature of man, *as fallen*. That the ungodliness or corruption which attaches to man's nature as fallen, does produce or imply a bondage or servitude of the will, by which men are, in fact, "unable by their own strength to convert themselves, or to prepare themselves thereunto," is evident in the nature of the case, and is clearly taught in Scripture. That any other kind or species of servitude, or necessity, attaches to the human will, is not by any means so certain. The only ground on which it can be alleged to rest is a metaphysical speculation, which, whether true or false, ought to be carefully distinguished from truths actually taught in Scripture; and which, while not itself positively sanctioned by Scripture, cannot, I think, be shown to be indispensably necessary for the exposition, illustration, or defence of any of those great doctrines, the belief of which is required in the word of God, and

the knowledge of which is necessary in order to an accurate acquaintance with the way of salvation.

Sec. III.—Conversion—Sovereign and Efficacious Grace.

The controversy between Augustine and his opponents turned, as we have said, to a large extent, upon the nature and import, the necessity, grounds, and results of that grace of God, which, in *some sense*, was universally admitted to be manifested in preparing men for heaven. That a certain character, and a certain mode of acting, in obedience to God's law, were in fact necessary, in order to men's attaining final happiness, and that men were in some sense indebted to God's grace or favour for realizing this, was universally conceded. It was conceded by Pelagius and his immediate followers, and it is conceded by modern Socinians; but then the explanation which these parties gave of this grace of God, which they professed to admit, made grace to be no grace, and practically made men, and not God, the authors of their own salvation, which the Socinians, consistently enough, guarantee at length to all men. With the original Pelagians and the modern Socinians, the grace of God, by which men are, in this life, led to that mode of acting which, in fact, stands connected with their welfare in the next,—(for even Socinians commonly admit some punishment of wicked men in the future world, though they regard it as only temporary),—consists in these two things: First, the powers and capacities with which He has endowed man's nature, and which are possessed by all men as they come into the world, along with that general assistance which He gives in His ordinary providence, in upholding and aiding them in their own exercise and improvement of these powers and capacities; and, secondly, in the revelation which He has given them to guide and direct them, and in the providential circumstances in which He may have placed them. This view of the grace of God, of course, assumes the non-existence of any such moral corruption attaching to men, as implies any inability on their part, in any sense, to obey the will of God, or to do what He requires of them; and, in accordance with this view of what man is and can do, ascribes to him a power of doing by his own strength, and without any special supernatural, divine assistance, all that is necessary for his ultimate welfare. This view is too flatly contradictory to the

plain statements of Scripture, and especially to what we are told there concerning the agency of the Holy Ghost, to have been ever very generally admitted by men who professed to receive the Bible as the word of God; and, accordingly, there has been a pretty general recognition of the necessity, in addition to whatever powers or capacities God may have given to men, and whatever aids or facilities of an external or objective kind He may have afforded them, of a subjective work upon them through special supernatural agency; and the question, whether particular individuals or bodies of men were involved more or less in the errors of semi-Pelagianism, or taught the true doctrine of Scripture, is, in part, to be determined by the views which they have maintained concerning the nature, character, and results of this special supernatural agency of God, in fitting men for the enjoyment of His own presence.

Even the original Pelagians admitted the existence of supernatural gracious influences exerted by God upon men; but then they denied that they were *necessary* in order to the production of any of those things which accompany salvation, and held that when bestowed they merely enabled men to attain them more easily than they could have done without them; while they also explicitly taught that men *merited* them, or received them, as the meritorious reward of their previous improvement of their own natural powers. An assertion of the *necessity* of a supernatural gracious work of God upon men's moral nature, in order to the production of what is, in point of fact, indispensable to their salvation, has been usually regarded as necessary to entitle men to the designation of semi-Pelagians,—a designation which comprehends all who, while admitting the necessity of a supernatural work of God, come short of the full scriptural views of the *grounds* of this necessity, and of the source, character, and results of the work itself. The original Pelagian system upon this point is intelligible and definite, and so is the scriptural system of Augustine; while any intermediate view, whether it may or may not be what can, with historical correctness, be called semi-Pelagianism, is marked by obscurity and confusion. Leaving out of view the proper Pelagian or Socinian doctrine upon this subject, and confining our attention to the scriptural system of Augustine on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to those confused and indefinite notions which fall short of it, though not to such an