

# Of the Corruption of Human Nature.

by John Gill

*The corruption of human nature is a universal and inherent condition of all individuals, present from birth and affecting all the powers and faculties of the soul and members of the body.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 6:5, Psalm 14:1, Jeremiah 17:9, John 3:6, Romans 3:10, Ephesians 2:3

**Topics:** "Redemption", "Human Depravity"

## Description

John Gill addresses the corruption of human nature, emphasizing that all individuals inherit a depraved nature from Adam's sin. He argues that this universal corruption is acknowledged by both heathens and scripture, asserting that no one is born pure and that all are under the dominion of sin. Gill explains that this inherent sinfulness manifests in every aspect of human life, from thoughts to actions, and highlights the necessity of redemption through Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit. He concludes that understanding this corruption is crucial for recognizing the need for salvation and the transformative power of God's grace.

## Transcript

A Body of Doctrinal Divinity

Book 3--Chapter 11

OF THE OF THE CORRUPTION OF HUMAN NATURE.

Having proved the imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin to his posterity, what follows upon this is, the corruption of nature derived unto them from him; by which is meant, the general depravity of mankind, of all the individuals of human nature, and of all the powers and faculties of the soul, and members of the body. 1. First, I shall prove that there is such a depravity and corruption of mankind. 1a. The heathens themselves have acknowledged and lamented it; they assert, that no man is born without sin;[1] that every man is naturally vicious;[2] that there is an evil disposition, or vicious affection, that is implanted and grows up in men;[3] and that there is a fatal portion of evil in all when born, from whence are the depravity of the soul, diseases, &c.[4] and that the cause of viciousness is rather from our parents, and from first principles, than from ourselves:[5] and Cicero[6] particularly laments that men should be brought into life by nature as a stepmother, with a naked, frail, and infirm body, and with a mind or soul prone to lusts. 1b.

Revelation asserts it; the Scriptures abound with testimonies of it, affirming that no man can be born pure and clean; that whatever is born of the flesh, or comes into the world by ordinary generation, is flesh, carnal and corrupt; that all men, Jews and Gentiles, are under sin, under the guilt, pollution and dominion of sin; that the imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil, and that continually; that the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked; and that out of it proceeds all that is vile and sinful (Job 14:4; John 3:6; Rom. 3:9; Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Matthew 15:19). 1c.

Reason confirms it, that so it must be; that if a tree is corrupt, it can bring forth no other than corrupt fruit; that if the root of mankind is unholy, the branches must be so too; if the fountain is impure, the streams must be so likewise; if immediate parents are unclean, their posterity must be unclean, since a clean thing cannot be brought out of an unclean; and if God has made of one man's blood all nations that are upon the face of the earth, and that blood is tainted with sin, all that proceed from him by ordinary generation must have the same taint. 1d.

All experience testifies the truth of this; no man was ever born into the world without sin; no one has ever been exempt from this contagion and defilement of nature, "there is none that doeth good, no not one" (Rom. 3:10) that does good naturally and of himself; the reason is, because there is none by nature good; of all the millions of men that have proceeded from Adam by ordinary generation, not one has been found without sin; there is but one individual of human nature that can be mentioned as an exception to this, and that is the human nature of Christ; and that is excepted because of its wonderful production, and did not descend from Adam by ordinary generation. 1e.

The necessity of redemption by Christ, and of regeneration by the Spirit of Christ, shows that men must be in a corrupt state, or there would have been no need of these. The redemption of men from sin, and from a vain conversation, supposes them to be under the power of sin, and the influence of it, to lead a vain sinful life; and if men were free from the pollution of sin, the blood of Christ to cleanse from all sin would have been unnecessary; his being made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to them, implies that they were foolish and unwise, that they were unrighteous and unholy, and slaves to sin and Satan: regeneration and sanctification are absolutely necessary to a man's enjoyment of eternal happiness; "except a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"; and "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (John 3:3; Heb. 12:14), but what occasion would there have been for man's being born again, or having a new or supernatural birth, if he was not defiled by his first and natural birth; or of being sanctified, if he was not unholy and unclean? (see 1 Cor. 6:9-11). 2.

Secondly, The names by which this corruption of nature is expressed in scripture deserve notice, since they not only serve to give more light into the nature of it, but also to confirm it; it is often called "sin" itself, being a want of conformity to the law of God, and contrary to it; it is represented as very active, working all manner of concupiscence, and death itself; deceiving, slaying, killing, and as exceeding sinful, even to an hyperbole, being big with all sin, and the source of all (Rom. 7:8,11,13).

It has the name of "indwelling sin"; the apostle speaks of it as such with respect to himself, "it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. 7:17,20), it is not what comes and goes, or is only a visitor now and then, but an inhabitant, and a very troublesome one; it hinders all the good, and does all the evil it can; and it abides, and will abide, as long as men are in this tabernacle, the body, and even in the saints, until the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved; it is like the spreading leprosy in the house, which was not to be cured until the house was pulled down, and the stones and timber carried into an unclean place: so the tabernacle of the body will not be rid of the corruption of nature, until it is unpinned and taken

down, and carried to the grave.

It is said to be the "law of sin", and a "law in the members"; which has force, power, and authority with it; it reigns like a king; yea, rather as a tyrant; for it reigns unto death, unless grace prevents it; it enacts laws, and requires obedience to them; and obedience is yielded to the lusts of it; men serve divers lusts and pleasures (Rom. 7:23; 8:2; 6:12; 5:21; Titus 3:3). Sometimes it is called the "body of sin", because it consists of various parts and members, as a body does; it is an aggregate, or an assemblage of sins, and includes all in it (Rom. 6:6; Col. 3:5).

Sometimes it goes by the name of the "old man", because it is the effect of the poison of the old serpent; it is near as old as the first man; and is as old as every man in whom it is; it exists as early as man himself does (Rom. 6:6; Eph 4:22). Very often it is called flesh, because it is propagated by the flesh, and is carnal and corrupt, and is opposed to the spirit or principle of grace, which is from the Spirit of God; and in which no good thing, nothing that is spiritual, dwells (John. 3:6; Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:18,25).

Once more, it is named, "lust" or "concupiscence"; which is sin itself, and the mother of all sin; it consists of various branches, called fleshly lusts, and worldly lusts, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (Rom. 7:7; Jam. 1:15; 1 John 2:15). The Jews commonly call it, the evil figment, or imagination. 3. Thirdly, This corruption of nature is universal,-- 3a. With respect to the individuals of mankind. Our first parents were, and all descending from them by ordinary generation are tainted with it.

This corruption immediately upon the sin of our first parents, took place in them; as appears from the shame, confusion, and fear they were at once filled with; from their gross stupidity and folly, in thinking to hide themselves from God among the trees of the garden; from their attempts to conceal, palliate, and excuse their sin, the woman by laying the blame on the serpent, the man on the woman, and ultimately on God himself. Their immediate offspring took the contagion from them; the first man born into the world, Cain, the corruption of nature soon appeared in him, in his wrathful and envious countenance, when his brother's sacrifice was preferred to his; nor could he be easy until he had shed his brother's blood, which he did: and though Abel is called righteous Abel, as he was, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and on account of the new man created in him unto righteousness and true holiness; in consequence of which he lived soberly and righteously; yet he was not without sin, or otherwise why did he offer sacrifice, and by faith looked to the sacrifice of Christ, which was to be offered up to make atonement for his sins, and those of others?

In the room of Abel, whom Cain slew, God raised up another seed to Adam, whom he begot in his own likeness, after his image; not in the likeness and image of God, in which Adam was created; but in that which he had brought upon himself, through his sin and fall: the posterity of this man, and of Cain, peopled and filled the whole world before the flood. And what is the account that is given of them? It is this, that the earth was corrupt through them; that all flesh had corrupted his way on the earth; and that only one man found grace in the sight of God; and that the imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually (Gen. 4:25; 5:3; 6:5,8,11,12).

And as for the inhabitants of the new world, who sprung from Noah and his three sons, who descended in a right line from Seth, much the same is said of them (Gen. 8:21). In short, all nations of the earth, which may be divided into Jews and Gentiles, and which include the whole, are all under sin, under the guilt and pollution of it; not the Gentiles only, whose times of ignorance God winked at, and whom he suffered to walk in their own ways, which were sinful ones; but even the people of Israel, whom God chose to be a

special and peculiar people, these were always rebellious, from the time they were a people; all the while Moses was with them; in the times of the Judges; and when under the government of Kings; as their several captivities testify; they were a seed of evil doers, a people laden with iniquity; in every age or period of time, whenever God took a survey of the state and condition of mankind, this was the sum of the account; "They are corrupt", &c. (Ps. 14:1-3; Rom. 3:9-12).

The contentions, quarrels, and wars which have been in the world, in all ages, are a strong, constant, and continued proof of the depravity of human nature; "for these come of lusts that war in the members" (Jam. 4:1), which, as it is true of the war between flesh and spirit in the soul; and of the animosities and contentions among professors of religion; so of wars among nations, in a civil sense; and which have been from the beginning, and still continue: a quarrel there was between the first two men that were born into the world, which issued in bloodshed; and as soon as kingdoms and states were formed, and kings over them, we hear of wars between them.

Look over the histories of all ages, and of all nations in them, and you will find them full of accounts of these things; all which have risen from the pride, ambition, and lusts of men. Yea, this depravity and corruption of nature has appeared, not only among the men of the world in all ages, but even among the people of God, and after they have been called by grace: there never was a just man that did good, and sinned not; in many things, in all things, they sin and offend; in them, that is, in their flesh, their corrupt part, no good thing dwells: such that say they have no sin, deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them. 3b.

This corruption of nature is general, with respect to the parts of man, to all the powers and faculties of his soul, and to the members of his body. 3b1. To the powers and faculties of the soul of man, to all that is within him; his heart is deceitful and desperately wicked; his inward part is wickedness itself; the thoughts of his heart are evil, vain, and sinful; yea, the imagination of the thoughts of his heart, the very substratum of thought, the first motions that are in man that way; the mind and conscience, are defiled, and nothing can remove the pollution but the blood of Jesus: the understanding is darkened through the blindness and ignorance that is in it; so that a mere natural man cannot discern the things of the Spirit of God; whatever knowledge men have of things natural and civil, they have none of things spiritual; wise they are to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge; they know not, nor will they understand: the will is averse to that which is good; the carnal mind is enmity to God, and not subject to the law of God; nor can it be, without his grace; it is hard, stiff, obstinate, and perverse, until the stony heart is taken away, and a heart of flesh is given.

The affections are inordinate, run in a wrong channel, are fixed on wrong objects; men hate what they should love, and love what they should hate; they hate the good, and love the evil; they are lovers of pleasures, of sinful lusts and pleasures, rather than lovers of God, good men, and good things. In short, there is no place clean, no part free from the pollution and influence of sin. 3b2. All the members of the body are defiled with it; the tongue is a little member, and is a world of iniquity itself, and defiles the whole body; the several members of it are used as instruments of unrighteousness; several of them are particularly mentioned in the general account of man's depravity, (Ro 3:1-31 as the throat, lips, mouth, and feet, all employed in the service of sin. 4.

Fourthly, The time when the corruption of nature takes place in man; the lowest date of it is his youth; "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21), that is, as soon as he is capable of exercising his reason, and of committing actual sin; and which, at this age, chiefly appears in lying and

disobedience to parents; and this is said, not of some particular men, or of some individuals, but of men in general; and not only as in the times of Noah, but in all succeeding generations to the end of the world.

This depravity of nature is in some passages carried up higher, even to a man's birth; "The wicked are estranged from the womb"; that is, from God, alienated from the life of God; being under the power of a moral death, or being dead in trespasses and sins; "They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Ps. 58:3), that is, as soon as they are capable of speaking; and the sin of lying, children are very early addicted to; and this is said, not only of such who in the event turn out very wicked, profligate and abandoned sinners, but even such as are born of religious parents, have a religious education, and become religious themselves, are "called transgressors from the womb" (Isa. 48:8), that is, as soon as capable of committing actual transgression.

David carries the pollution of his nature still higher, when he says; "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5), which he observes, not to extenuate, but rather to aggravate, his actual transgression he was confessing, in that he had been so early and so long sinful; and that whereas he was not ignorant of the corruption of his nature, and how prone he was to sin, that he should be no more upon his guard against it. He does not say, "my sin, and my iniquity", though it was his, being in his nature; but "sin" and "iniquity", being what was common to him with the rest of mankind; and what had attended him at the formation of him in the womb, and so before he could commit any actual sin; and therefore must design the original corruption of his nature; and that as soon as soul and body were united together he was a sinful creature.

To this sense of the words it is objected, that David speaks only of his mother's sin; and broad hints are given that her sin was the sin of adultery. This shows how much the advocates for the purity of human nature are pinched with this passage, to betake themselves to such an interpretation of it, at the expense of the character of an innocent person, of whom nothing of this kind is suggested in the sacred writings; but, on the contrary, that she was a pious and religious person; David valued himself upon his relation to her, and pleads to be regarded for her sake (Ps. 86:16; 116:16).

Besides, if this had been the case, David would have been illegitimate; and, by a law in Israel, would have been forbid entering into the congregation of the Lord, and could not have bore any office in church or state; nor did it answer the scope and design of David, to expose the sins of others, especially his own parents, while he is confessing and lamenting his own; nor does the particle "in" belong to his mother, but to himself; the sense is not, that his mother being in sin or that she in and "through sin" conceived him; but that he was conceived being in sin, or that as soon as the mass of human nature was shaped and formed in him, and soul and body were united together, he was in sin, and sin in him; or he became a sinful creature.

Some who do not go the above lengths, yet suppose that the sin of his immediate parents, in begetting and conceiving him, though in lawful wedlock, is meant; but this cannot be; since the propagation of the human species by generation, is a principle implanted in nature by God himself, and so not sinful. It was the first law of nature, "Increase and multiply"; given in the state of innocence. Marriage was instituted in Paradise, and has been always esteemed honorable when the bed is undefiled.

Besides, one of the words used, translated "shapen", is in the passive form, and respects what neither David nor his parents could be active in; and the whole refers to the amazing work of his formation, which he so much admires, (Ps 139:14-16. It is objected by others, that he goes no higher than his mother; and

takes no notice of Adam. Nor was there any need of it; for since the corruption of nature goes in the channel of generation, he had no occasion, in speaking of that, to take notice of any other but his immediate parents, through whom it was conveyed to him: it is further urged, that David speaks not of other men, only of himself.

But that all mankind are corrupted in the same manner, other passages are full and express for it (Job 14:4; John 3:6; Ps. 58:3; Eph. 2:3). And if David, a man so famous for early piety and religion, one after God's own heart, whom he raised up to fulfil his will, was tainted with sin in his original formation, then surely the same must be true of all others; who, after him, can rise up and say, it was not so with him? Lastly, some will have these words to be figurative and hyperbolical, and only mean, that he had often sinned from his youth: but men, in confessing sin, do not usually exaggerate it, but declare it plainly, ingenuously, just as it is; and, indeed, the sinfulness of nature, cannot well be hyperbolized; and, if such a figure was attempted, it might be allowed of, without lowering it; (see Rom. 7:13). 5.

Fifthly, The way and manner in which the corruption of nature is conveyed to men, as to become sinful by it. 5a. It cannot be of God, or by infusion from him; he is of purer eyes than to behold it; he has no pleasure in it; it is abominable to him, and therefore would never infuse and implant it in the nature of men. Some of the ancient heretics fancied, there were two first principles, or beings; the one good, and the other evil; and that all that is good comes from the one; and all that is evil from the other: but this is to make two first causes, and so two gods; and those diametrically opposite to each other. 5b.

Nor can it be by imitation of parents, either first or immediate; there are some who never sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, and yet die; which they would not, were they not guilty and polluted; there are many born into the world who never knew their immediate parents, and therefore could not imitate them. Some their fathers die before they are born; and some lose both parents before capable of imitation; and if the taint is at their formation, and before their birth, it is impossible to be by imitation. 5c.

Nor does this come to pass through souls being in a pre-existent state. Some of the heathen philosophers, as Pythagoras and Plato, held a pre-existence of souls before the world was; and which notion was adopted by Origen, who held, that souls in this pre-existent state sinned each separately for themselves; and for their sins were thrust in time into human bodies, or into others, in which they suffer. Some think this notion was embraced by some of the Jews in Christ's time, and even by some of his followers; as is urged from John 9:1-3 but then it is not allowed of by him.

And some modern Christians have imbibed the same heathenish and Jewish notion; who, observing that some passages of scripture speak of the pre-existence of Christ, in his divine nature, or as a divine Person, have interpreted them of the pre-existence of his human soul; and have proceeded to assert the pre-existence of all souls, but without any color of reason or scripture authority. 5d. Nor is this to be accounted for by the traduction of the soul from immediate parents; or by the generation of it, together with the body, from them.

Could this indeed be established, it would greatly remove the difficulty which attends the doctrine of the propagation of the corruption of nature by natural generation; hence Austin was once inclined to it on this account; but it is so big with absurdities, as has been seen in a preceding chapter, that it cannot be admitted; as, that spirit is educed out of matter, and generated from it, and therefore must be material, corruptible, and mortal; for whatever is generated is corruptible, and consequently the soul is not immortal; a doctrine never to be given up: and, besides, according to the Scriptures, the soul is immediately created

by God (Zech. 12:1; Heb. 12:9).

That this corruption of nature is conveyed by generation, seems certain; (see Job 14:4; John 3:6; Eph 2:3), for since nature is conveyed in that way, the sin of nature also must come in like manner. But how to account for this, consistent with the justice, holiness, and goodness of God, is a difficulty, and is one of the greatest difficulties in the whole scheme of divine truths; wherefore some have thought it more advisable to sit down and lament this corruption, and consider how we must be delivered from it, than to inquire curiously in what way and manner it comes into us; as a man that is fallen into a pit, does not so much concern himself how he came into it, as how to get out of it, and to be cleansed from the filth he has contracted in it.

But a sober inquiry into this matter, with a due regard to the perfections of God, the sacred Scriptures, and the analogy of faith, may be both lawful and laudable. The difficulty is chiefly occasioned by the manner in which the case is put; as, that a soul that comes pure and holy out of the hand of God, should be united to a sinful body, and be defiled by it; blot if it can be made out, that neither of these is the fact, that the body is not properly and formally sinful, when the soul is first united to it, nor the soul pure and holy when created by God; that is, not in such sense as the soul of Adam was when created; the difficulty will be greatly lessened, if not entirely removed. 5d1.

Let it be observed, then, that the contagion of sin does not take place on the body apart, nor on the soul apart; but upon both when united together, and not before: it was not the body apart in the substance of Adam's flesh that sinned; nor was the soul apart represented by him; but both as in union, and as one man, one person; for not bodies and souls separately, but men, were considered in Adam, and sinned in him; and so as the imputation of the guilt of his sin is not made to the body apart, nor to the soul apart, but to both as united; when, and not before, it becomes a son of Adam, a member of him; so the corruption of nature, derived from him, takes place on neither apart, but upon them as united together, and constituted man.

The body, antecedent to its union to a rational soul, is no other than a brute, an animal, like other animals; and is not a subject either of moral good or moral evil; as it comes from a corrupt body, and is of a corruptible seed, it has in it the seeds of many evils, as other animals have, according to their nature; but then these are natural evils, not moral ones; as the savageness, fierceness, and cruelty of lions, bears, wolves, &c. But when this body comes to be united to a rational soul, it becomes then a part of a rational creature, it comes under a law, and its nature not being conformable to that law, its nature, and the evils and viciousness of it, are formally sinful.

It has before a disposition, an aptitude to what is sinful; and contains fit fuel for sin, which its vicious lusts and appetites kindle, when these become formally sinful, through its becoming a part of a rational creature; and these increasing, operate upon and gradually defile the soul. Should it be said, that matter cannot operate on spirit; this may be sooner said than proved. How easy is it to observe, that when our bodies are indisposed through diseases and pain, what an effect this has upon our minds; from the temperament and constitution of the body many incommodities and disadvantages arise unto the soul: persons that have much of the "atra bilis", or black choler in them, a melancholy and bodily disorder, what a gloominess does it throw upon the mind! and to what passion, anger, and wrath, are men of a sanguine complexion subject? and to what is insanity owing, but to a disorder in the brain? and to a defect there must it be attributed, that some are idiots, and others of very mean capacities, and very short memories; and where the bodily organs are not well attempered and accommodated, the soul is cramped, and cannot

duly perform its functions and offices; and a man must be inattentive to himself, if he does not observe, that as by thoughts in the mind motions are excited in the body, whether sinful, civil, or religious; so motions of the body are often the means and occasion of exciting thoughts in the mind. 5d2.

It is not fact that souls are now created by God pure and holy; that is, as Adam's soul was created, with original righteousness and purity; with a propensity to that which is good, and with power to do it. But they are created with a want of original righteousness and holiness; without a propensity to good, and without power to perform; and a reason will be given presently, why it is so; and why it should be so. And such a creation may be conceived of without any imputation of unrighteousness to God, and without making him the author of sin.

It may be conceived of without any injury to the perfections of God; as, that he may create a soul in its pure essence, with all its natural powers and properties, without any qualities of moral purity or impurity, holiness or unholiness; or that he may create one with a want of righteousness, and with an impotence to good, and without any propensity to it; since by so doing he does not put any fulness into the soul, nor any inclination to sin. And that the souls of men should be now so created, it is but just and equitable, as will appear by the following considerations: Adam's original righteousness was not personal, but the righteousness of his nature; he had it not as a private single person, but as a public head, as the root, origin, and parent of mankind; so that had he stood in his integrity, it would have been conveyed to his posterity by natural generation; just as he having sinned, the corruption of nature is derived to them in the same way; what he had, he had not for himself only, but for his posterity; and what he lost, he lost not for himself only, but for his posterity; and he sinned not as a single private person, but as the head, root, origin, and parent of all his offspring; they were all in him, and sinned in him as one man; so that it was but just that they should be deprived, as he, of the glory of God, that is, of the image of God, which chiefly lay in original righteousness, in an inclination to good, and a power to perform it; and, being stripped of this, or being devoid of it, an inclination to sin follows upon it, as soon as it offers; and in the room of it unrighteousness and unholiness take place; for, as Austin says, the loss of good takes the name of evil; and this being the case, how easily may it be accounted for, that a soul without any fence or guard, wanting original righteousness, be gradually mastered and overcome by the corrupt and sensual appetites of the body.

And to all this agrees what a learned author[7] well observes, "God is to be considered by us, not as a Creator only, but also as a Judge; he is the Creator of the soul, as to its substance; in respect to which it is pure when created. Moreover, God is a Judge, when he creates a soul, as to this circumstance; namely, that not a soul simply is to be created by him; but a soul of one of the sons of Adam: in this respect it is just with him to desert the soul, as to his own image lost in Adam; from which desertion follows a want of original righteousness; from which want original sin itself is propagated."

Should it be said, that though the justice and holiness of God are cleared from all imputation, in this way of considering things; yet it does not seem so agreeable to the goodness and kindness of God to create such a soul, and unite it to a body, in the plight and condition before described; since the natural consequence of it seems to be unavoidably the moral pollution of them both. To which may be replied, that God in this proceeds according to the original law of nature, fixed by himself; and which, according to the invariable course of things, appears to be this, with respect to the propagation of mankind: that when matter generated is prepared for the reception of the soul; as soon as that preparation is finished; that very instant a soul is created, and ready at hand to be united to it, and it is.

Now the law for the propagation of mankind by natural generation, was given to Adam in a state of innocence, and as soon as created, "Increase and multiply"; he after this corrupted and defiled the whole frame of his nature, and that of all his posterity. Is it reasonable now, that because man has departed from his obedience to the law of God, that God should depart from his original law, respecting man's generation? It is not reasonable he should, nor does he, nor will he depart from it: this appears from cases, in which, if in any, he could be thought to do so; as in the case of insanity, which infects a man's blood and family, and becomes a family disorder; and yet to put a stop to this God does not depart from the order of things fixed by him; and so in the case of such who are unlawfully begotten in adultery or fornication; when what is generated is fit to receive the soul, there is one prepared and united to it.

And sometimes in this way God brings into the world some that belong to the election of grace; one of our Lord's ancestors came into the world in this way (Gen. 38:29; Matthew 1:3). What if Adam eats the forbidden fruit, and men drink water out of another's cistern, stolen waters, which are sweet unto them, and thereby transgress the law of God; must he forsake his own stated law and order of things? No; nature itself does not do so: a man steals a quantity of wheat, and sows it in his field; nature proceeds according to its own laws, fixed by the God of nature; the earth receives the seed, though stolen, into its bosom, cherishes it, and throws it out again, and a plentiful crop is produced.

And shall nature act its part, and not the God of nature? He will; and the rather he will go on in his constant course, that the sin of men might be manifest, and that sin be his punishment. And in this light, indeed, we are to consider the corruption of nature; a moral death, which is no other than a deprivation of the image of God, a loss of original righteousness, and an incapacity to attain to it, was threatened to Adam, and inflicted on him as a punishment. And since all his posterity sinned in him, why should not the same pass upon them? and, indeed, it is by the just ordination of God that things are as they be, in consequence of Adam's sin, who cannot do an unjust thing; there is no unrighteousness in him; he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; and so in this. And here we should rest the matter; in this we should acquiesce; and humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. ENDNOTES:

[1] Which Plato calls kakofuia, and defines it kakia en fusei, an evil in nature, Plato, Definitiones. "Nam vitiis nemo sine nascitur--", Horat. Satyr, l. 1. satyr 3. v. 68.

[2] "Unicuique dedit vitium natura creata", Propert. l. 2. eleg. 22 ver. 17.

[3] Laertius, l. 2. in vita Aristippi.

[4] Plutarch, de Consol. ad Apoll. vol. 2. p. 104.

[5] Timaeus Locrus de Natura Mundi, p. 21.

[6] De Republica, l. 3. apud August. contr. Julian l. 4. c. 12.

[7] Sandford or Parker de Descensu Christi ad inferos, l. 3. s. 65. p. 121, 122.

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