

OF THE SINFULNESS OF MAN'S NATURAL STATE.

PSAL. li. 5.—*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

MAN that was holy and happy is now fallen; and his fall should never be forgotten, but lamented, though it were with tears of blood. Man's first sin was the spring of all our woes, the poisonous fountain from whence all our misery flowed. It brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery; a state wherein man can do nothing but sin, wherein every thought, every word, and every action is tainted with sin, wherein enmity to God and his holy nature, and rebellion against and opposition to his righteous law universally reign and prevail. In this dismal state to which mankind are reduced by the fall, no true holiness is attainable, for it is a state of sin; and no salvation from wrath can be had, for it is a state of misery. The state we must be brought into, out of our sinful and miserable state under the breach of the covenant of works, if we would attain unto salvation, is the state of grace under the new covenant. Those that are delivered from their natural state, under the broken covenant, are persons effectually called by grace, and are 'in Christ Jesus,' Rom. viii. 1. Those that are still under the bondage of the old covenant, are out of Christ, and 'have no hope,' Eph. ii. 12. This state is a very sinful and miserable state. For the power that the covenant of works has over them, is a commanding, cursing, and condemning power: it commands them to yield perfect obedience, under pain of the curse, but affords no strength for performing it; and it curses and condemns them for every the least failure. The source of all is the total corruption and depravity of human nature, which we derive from our first father, in whom we all sinned, and with whom we fell, in his first transgression. In the text we have,

1. A plain confession of the being of original sin. Here is *sin* and *iniquity*, which the Psalmist owns he had while yet in the womb, *sin* in which he was *shapen*, and *iniquity* in which he was *conceived*. This was not peculiar to the Psalmist, but is common to all mankind sprung in an ordinary way from the first transgressor Adam.

2. The way of the conveyance of this original sin, viz. by natural generation. In this way every son and daughter of Adam are infected with this leprosy.

3. The malignant efficacy it hath on men's lives; *Behold*, says David, *I was shapen in iniquity, &c.* He points out original sin as

the fountain of all his actual transgressions. For how can a corrupt fountain send out wholesome streams ?

The doctrine observable from the text is,

Doctr. 'The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin, together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.'

In discoursing from this doctrine I will shew,

I. That there is such a thing as original sin.

II. Wherein original sin consists.

III. Deduce some inferences for application.

I. Our first business is to shew, that there is such a thing as original sin. Of this we have melancholy proofs.

1. Consider scripture-testimonies. In the text we have David, a man after God's own heart, yet confessing he was *shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin*. Adam begets Seth, from whom the whole race of mankind derive their origin, after 'his own image,' Gen. v. 1. opposed to 'the image of God,' after which he was made, Gen. i. 26. consisting in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. Job says chap. xiv. 4. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? not one.' This is God's verdict on all mankind, Gen. vi. 5. 'Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually.'

2. This is plain from the case of infants, which we all once were. We may plainly read in their faces, that we are covered over with sin and guilt before any other covering come on us. For, (1.) What else mean scripture-ordinances about them ? If there were not in them a superfluity of naughtiness, why were they circumcised ? if they are not unclean, why are they baptised ? This corruption of human nature was also shadowed forth by the law, concerning purifying of women. (2.) Consider the sad effects of sin upon them, which meet them as soon as they come into the world, yea in the womb, such as sickness, pains, death, &c., which says, that 'by nature we are the children of wrath,' Eph. ii. 3. (3.) Consider the early appearances of Adam's image in them, before ever they come to the use of reason. What a deal of pride, ambition, curiosity, vanity, wilfulness, and averseness to good, appears in them ; and when they creep out of infancy, what obstinacy and incorrigibleness appears in them ; so that there is a necessity of using the rod of correction to drive away the foolishness that is bound in their heart, Prov. xxii. 15.

3. The universal necessity of regeneration plainly proves the corruption of our nature, John iii. 3. 'Except a man be born again,

he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Were we not disjointed by nature, what need would there be for us to be taken down, and put up again? If the first birth were right, what need would there be for a second?

II. I come now to shew wherein original sin consists. It consists in these three things: the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of the whole nature.

First, Original sin consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin. Guilt is an obligation to punishment. For this sin, which is ours by imputation, we are liable to punishment. This guilt lies on all men by nature, Rom. v. 18. And this guilt of Adam's first sin is original sin imputed; of which I spoke in the former discourse. The only remedy for it is in Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 22. Eph. i. 7. Rom. iii. 24.

Secondly, It consists in the want of original righteousness. Original righteousness is that righteousness and entire rectitude of all the faculties of the soul wherein man was created. Man's soul was so adorned with it, that it resembled its great Maker. But now man is stript of these ornaments, he is left quite naked.

1. There is a want of that knowledge in the mind wherewith man was created. That light that was set up in the soul of man is now gone; though the candlestick is not removed, the candle is, Job xi. 12. 'For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt.' The mind is like the ostrich, whom God hath deprived of understanding. 'The understanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in men, because of the blindness of their heart, Eph. iv. 18. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can ye know them, because they are spiritually discerned,' 1 Cor. ii. 14.

2. That righteousness which was in the will of man, that bent and inclination to good, is now removed, Eccl. vii. 29. 'I know [says the apostle] that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not,' Rom. vii. 18.

3. The holiness of the affections is gone. Spiritual affections have taken the wing, and left the soul as a bird without wings which hath nothing whereby it can mount, Rom. vii. 18. forecited.

This want of original righteousness is a sin, being a want of conformity to the law of God, which requires all moral perfection. It is also a punishment of sin, and so is justly inflicted by God. And though the want of this righteousness be sin, yet God's depriving man of it, or rather not giving it him, is a most just act; seeing

Adam, having got it for himself and his posterity, threw it away, and God is not obliged to restore it. And it can be no other sin but the first sin, whereof this with-holding of original righteousness is the punishment. So true it is, that if the imputation of Adam's first sin be denied, original sin is quite rased, there is no foundation left for it.

Thirdly, It consists in the corruption of the whole nature. Concerning which two things are to be considered.

1. That the nature of man is indeed corrupted, We must not think that original sin lies only in the want of original righteousness. No, man is not only void of good qualities naturally, but he is filled with evil ones.

(1.) The scripture holds it forth so, while it calls this sin 'the flesh which lusteth against the Spirit, the old man, the body of death, the law of the members warring against the law of the mind, &c.

(2.) The soul of man cannot be otherwise. It must needs be morally right or wrong; either it is habitually conformable to the law of God, or not; if it be not, its inclinations are against it. The soul has either God's image or that of the devil upon it. If there is not light in the mind, there must be darkness there.

2. Consider the nature and extent of this corruption. As to its extent,

1st. All men are corrupted. There is no exception of any one of Adam's posterity descending from him by ordinary generation: Gen. vi. 5. 'God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.' Job xiv. 4. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.' The Virgin Mary, of the substance of whose body the holy human nature of Christ was formed by the operation of the Holy Spirit, is included among the rest. Even the children of holy parents are corrupted; for generation is by nature, not by grace. The circumcised father begets an uncircumcised child, as the purest corn that is sown produceth chaff.

2dly, All of every man is corrupted; it is a leprosy that has overspread universally; a leaven that hath leavened the whole lump. It has overspread,

1. The soul in all its faculties, Tit. i. 15. 'Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.'

1st, If we look to the understanding, there we will see,

(1.) Darkness over all that region. It is the land of darkness and shadow of death, where the very light is darkness; darkness in

the abstract, Eph. v. 8. We are born blind, and cannot be restored without a miracle. There is a dreadful stupidity in spiritual things; the natural man cannot take them up, 1 Cor. ii. 14.; but he is a fool, and a madman, because in these things he is a mere natural.

(2.) A bitter root of unbelief naturally grows there, which over-spreads the whole life. Men by nature are 'children of disobedience,' Eph. ii. 2. Or, 'of impersuasibleness.' How like Adam do we look! how universally is that article embraced, 'Ye shall not surely die!' and how does it spread itself through the lives of men, as if they were resolved to fall after the same example of unbelief!

2dly, As for the will, call it no more will, but lust. It is free to evil but not to good. 'God made man upright,' his will straight with his own, with a power in the will to do good and an inclination and bent thereto. But now behold in it,

(1.) A pitiful weakness. Man naturally cannot will what is good and acceptable to God. He cannot produce one holy act until grace change the heart, more than a stone can feel, or a beast reason. Hence the apostle says, Phil. ii. 13. 'It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' Rom. v. 6. 'We are without strength.' 2 Cor. iii. 5. 'We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God.' Men by nature are dead spiritually 'dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. ii. 1. If they will what is good, it is in a carnal manner.

(2.) An aversion to good. We are backward to it, and therefore must be drawn as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Sin is the natural man's element; and as the fish is averse to come out of the water, so is the sinner from the puddle of sin, in which he delights to lie. Hence says our Lord, John v. 40. 'Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.' They were not only naturally unable to come, but they had no inclination to the duty. Their stomachs are full, and, like the full soul that loaths the honey-comb, they nauseate the heavenly food in their offer.

(3.) There is a proneness to evil, a bent and inclination to it, Hos. xi. 7. 'My people are bent to backsliding from me.' Hence natural men are mad on idols. Set sin and duty, death and life, cursing and blessing before the natural man, and leave the will to itself, it will naturally run to sin, to death, and the curse, as the waters run down a steep place.

(4.) There is a crossness and contrariety in the will to God and goodness, Rom. viii. 7. 'The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' That God forbids a thing is a motive to the will to like it. No fruit is so sweet to the corrupt appetite as the forbidden fruit.

Strip sin naked of all its ornaments and allurements, and the natural man will court it for itself. The will naturally lies cross to God.

(1.) It is cross to his nature. He is holiness itself; and the will rejects holiness for itself. Hence men 'say to God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways,' Job xxi. 14. The will is an enemy to the scripture God, and hence they do what they can for the change, Psal. l. 21. It was most agreeable to nature, that the Pagans made their gods profane. The proud man desires to have none above him to controul him, or call him to account, and the natural man wants to have no God, Ps. xiv. 1.

(2.) It is cross to his will. (1.) To his law, which binds to conformity to God, which the natural man hates, Rom. viii. 7. Corrupt nature rises against this yoke: they would have the law brought down to their corruptions. Hence that is a distinguishing mark of the godly man, 'His delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law doth he meditate day and night,' Psal. i. 2. (2.) To his gospel. The will of man naturally is quite opposite to the grand device of salvation through the Lord Jesus; and natural men, like Judas, would rather hang themselves than go to Christ, submitting themselves unto the righteousness of God, Rom. x. 3. They say, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' Luke xix. 14. The gospel is designed for humbling the pride and selfishness of men; but they are for exalting self, and placing it on the throne. It lies cross to the will of God in its chief acts.

(1.) As to the intention, the will is wholly cross and perverse as to the ultimate end. Self is set up for the chief end instead of God, 2 Tim. iii. 2. 'Men shall be lovers of their own selves.' In this we follow our first father's footsteps. The will is like a traitor, who, instead of gathering in the rents of the crown to the king, gathers them in to itself.

(2.) As to the choice, Psal. iv. 6. 'There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?' God offers himself to be the sinner's portion; but he chuses the creatures for his portion, and sin for the way to obtain it.

(5.) There is contumacy in it. The will is wilful in evil and will not be turned, though it should run on the sword-point of vengeance, Ezek. xviii. 31. 'Why will ye die, O house of Israel?' Like the leviathan in his way, it 'laugheth at the shaking of a spear,' Job xli. 29. 'I shall have peace (says the natural man), though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst,' Dent. xxix. 19. This is the stony heart, which as a stone is insensible, resisting, inflexible, but by the power of divine grace, hard to receive impressions, but as the water to let them go.

3dly, As to the affections, they are quite disordered. While man stood, his reason was subject to the law, and his affections to his reason: but now, like the unruly horse, they will either not receive, or else run away with the rider, Jer. ii. 23, 24. *

(1.) The affections are misplaced as to their objects. The natural man is a spiritual monster. His heart is there, where his feet should be, fixed on the earth; his heels are lifted up against Heaven, which his heart should be set on. He loves what he should hate, and hates what he should love; joys in what he ought to mourn for, and mourns for what he should rejoice in; glories in his shame, and is ashamed of his glory; abhors what he should desire, and desires what he should abhor; acting in direct opposition to the apostolical injunction of 'seeking those things which are above,' Col. i. 1.

(2.) When the natural man's affections are fixed on lawful objects, they can keep no bounds. They cannot flow to the creature, without overflowing; they cannot love a lawful object, without overloving it; nor joy in any created comfort, without excess. The affections are never right, only evil.

Further, this corruption has spread even to the body. That which should be a temple for God is become a garrison of lusts.

1. It incites the soul to sin. What a snare is the temperature of the body to the soul, leading it to the commission of many foul sins! Therefore the godly beat it down as an unruly beast, keep it under, and bring it into subjection, that it cast not the soul into sin and misery, 1 Cor. ix. 27. It is the house wherein snares are spread for the soul; so that many, to please their bodies, make shipwreck of their souls.

2. Its members are members of unrighteousness, Rom. vi. 13. Are not the eyes and ears the windows whereat death comes in to the soul? The tongue is an untamed beast, by which the impure heart vents its filthiness. The throat is an open sepulchre; the feet run the devil's errands; and the belly is made a god. The body is naturally an agent for Satan, and a magazine of armour against the Lord.

What shall we say? who can express the corruption of nature? The whole man is corrupted. All defilement is in us naturally, Rom. i. 29. The treasure of wickedness is in the heart, Matth. xii. 35. It is a cage full of unclean birds. The tongue is a world of iniquity, an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. What an universe of wickedness and impurity must the heart then be?

This is a rude draught of the corruption of human nature in its fallen state, which the Spirit of God in scripture calls *flesh*, in

many passages that might be quoted. The propriety of this expression will be evident from the following particulars.

1. It denotes the degrading and debasing malignity that is in sin, which unspirits and unsouls a man, if I may be allowed such expressions. A sinner is called a carnal man, a man made up of nothing but a lump of dull flesh kneaded together without spirit. And therefore the apostle, Rom. viii. 13, does not bid men mortify the deeds of their souls, but of their bodies, because wicked men act as if they had no souls, or at least not so noble a soul as the rational one is.

2. It denotes what it is that sin tends unto. It is only to please and gratify the flesh; to pamper the body, that sensual, sordid, and baser part of man. The soul of the natural man acts for no higher end than the soul of a beast. The soul of a beast acts not for itself, but is made a drudge and underling to the body. It serves only to carry the body up and down to its pasture, and make it to relish its food and fodder. And thus it is with the souls of wicked men; they act not for themselves, but are only provisors for the body, that seek out and lay in provision for the flesh. Hence we have that exhortation, Rom. xiii. 14. 'Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.'

3. Though the soul be the chief seat of the flesh, yet the flesh is the great instrument by which it acts, Rom. vi. 19. Hence its actions are called 'the deeds of the body,' Rom. viii. 13. Though some sins are seated in the mind, as heresies, covetousness, malice, pride, &c. yet they are set down among the works of the flesh in the apostle's catalogue, Gal. v. 19, 20. And as to the sins of omission, they usually take their rise in men from some inordinate sensual affection to the creature, which causes them to omit their duty to God, but, generally speaking, most sins are acted by the flesh. When the devil would set up a kingdom in the hearts of men, he doth it by the flesh; for what is nearer and dearer to us than our flesh? and things pleasant and grateful to the flesh strongly promote his designs. These darken and blind their minds, corrupt their hearts, and entice and allure their affections; so that they hunt after them with an eager pursuit, to the woful neglect of God and their precious souls.

4. The disorder of the sensitive appetite, which inclines men to the interest and conveniences of the flesh, is the great cause of all sin; and therefore fallen man is represented in scripture as wholly governed by his sensual inclinations, Gen. vi. 3. John iii. 6. as if he had nothing in him but what is earthly and carnal. Our souls cleave so fast to the earth in our degenerate state, and are so much

addicted to the body, that they have lost their primitive excellency and beauty. Our understanding, will, and affections, are wofully distempered by our senses, and enslaved to the flesh. So that with great propriety corrupt nature is called *flesh* in scripture.

1. This corruption is most truly and properly sin, even in the regenerate, where the guilt of it is removed by the blood of Christ, and the power of it subdued by his Spirit and grace. And all the motions thereof in them are sin; as appears from what the apostle says, Rom. vii. 5, 7, 8. 'For when we are in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.' Gal. v. 17. 'For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.'

2. This corruption is exceeding sinful. For the law and covenant of works made with Adam, as the head and representative of all his posterity, required perfect obedience and conformity to God both in heart and life, to love the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind. God placed him in a holy and happy state, endued him with his image, consisting in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; and gave him sufficient power and ability to perform the duty he owed to his Lord, and to continue in the course of obedience, till he should be confirmed both in holiness and felicity. Now, man having by sin stript himself of the image of God, and rendered himself incapable of obeying God either in heart or life, the law still requires all the holiness and righteousness that it did when he was in his upright estate; and the want of conformity to the law of God must be exceeding sinful, as a breach of the law of God, and a trampling on his image. And, in order to affect us with a deep sense of the sinfulness of the total corruption of our nature, let us consider,

(1.) The pregnancy of this corruption. It is indeed all sin virtually, which is retailed out in many particular sinful acts. It contains in its bowels the seed and spawn of all wickedness whatsoever. All treasons and disobedience, rebellions and hostilities, against the supreme and sovereign majesty of heaven, are to be found in it. It is the nursery, seed, and womb, yea, every sin that is possible to be committed is in this womb, so conceived and formed, animated and brought to the birth, as there needs nothing

but a temptation and opportunity to bring it forth. It may be you never imbrued your hands in your brother's blood, as Cain did, nor have actually committed murder, yet the seed and spawn of it is lurking in thy heart; and the only reason why you have kept free from it is, because God hath restrained and kept thee back, and hath not suffered the like temptations and occasions to come in thy way. It may be you never set cities on fire, dashed out children's brains, ript up women with child, as Hazael did; yet all these sins are lurking in thy heart, though they were never acted by thine hands. Hazael was angry when the prophet told him so much, 2 Kings viii. 12. 13. but he acted all that afterwards and more, when he was advanced to his master's throne. He could not think that ever he could be guilty of such atrocious and detestable crimes, unless he were transformed into a dog. He was little acquainted with the desperate wickedness of man's nature, which habitually inclines him to the most barbarous and bloody cruelty.

2. This corruption that lies in the heart is the woful cause, source, and spring of all the actual transgressions which stain men's lives. Every wicked and sinful action derives its descent from this. From whence come murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, &c? Our Saviour tells us, Matt. xv. 19. They proceed out of the heart. If you will trace these streams to the true spring and fountain, you will find it to be the sin and wickedness of the heart. This is that seed and loathsome spawn to which all this detestable vermin owe their original. It is fruitful and productive of all manner of evils. It is that which fills people's mouths with cursing, swearing, lying, slandering, &c. makes their feet swift to shed blood, and puts the poison of asps under their tongue, Rom. iii. 14, 15. Yea, this defiles the whole man, and stains him with an universal pollution, Matth. xv. 18. As a lethargy in the head, or an indisposition in the stomach, diffuseth an universal malignity through the whole body, these being sovereign and principal parts in man; so this wickedness that dwells in the heart, poisons the whole life. Many a filthy and impure stream issues from this corrupt fountain.

(3.) Consider what a monstrous deformity it hath brought on the soul. The mind of man was the candle of the Lord. As it proceeded from God it was a lightsome beam, shining with more lustre and splendour than a ray of the sun. But now it is dark and obscure, and is become a stinking and noisome dunghill. It was once one of the brightest and most excellent pieces of the creation, next unto the angelical nature; but by sin it is transformed into an ugly monster. We justly reckon that birth monstrous, where the members have not their due place; when the head is where the feet

should be, or the legs in place of the arms, &c. Thus the noble powers and faculties of the soul are monstrously misplaced. That which should be highest is now lowest; that which should rule and keep the throne, is brought into a miserable subjection and bondage: that which should serve and obey, does now tyrannise and command. Passion over-rules reason, and the will receives laws from the fancy and appetite. In man's primitive state, the will was sovereign lord, reason was its counsellor, and appetite subject to both; but now it hath aspired and got above them, and oftentimes carries both into a servile compliance with the dictates of sense. Any spot or blemish upon the face of a beautiful child, when it comes but accidentally, grieves and afflicts the parents: how much more cause have we to bemoan the natural, universal, and monstrous deformity which has seized upon our souls?

4. Consider the devilishness of this corruption. There is nothing in all the world hath so much of the devil in it as sin. It is his first-born, the beginning of his strength; that which he hatched and brought into the world. It is his work and employment, his great master-piece, that wherein he applauds himself and glories, John viii. 44. This is his image that he hath drawn upon man. Those black characters which are drawn on the soul, are of Satan's impression. As face answers to face, so doth man's corrupt nature answer the nature of the devil. It hath all the essential parts of the diabolical nature. There is in it a strong aversion from all that is good, so is there in him; and a mighty propensity to all evil, so is it in the devil. It is Satan's correspondent, that maintains secret and constant intercourse with our mortal enemy. It is a domestic enemy, ready on all occasions to betray the soul into the hands of him, who is always going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. O, should it not deeply humble us before God, that we are so near a kin to hell, and have such a correspondence with the devil; that our corruption makes us so like unto him, and daily affords him so great an advantage against us?

(5.) Consider the brutishness of this corruption. Sin hurries the soul on with a blind rage and fury to such acts and motions, as men in their right reason would highly condemn. It is on this account that men are compared to brute-beasts and irrational creatures: as to the horse and the mule, to a wild ass, an untamed hieffer, &c. The brute-creatures, though they be not capable to know God, yet they will know and take some notice of their benefactor, and such as feed and keep them. But men kick against God, they wound Christ, and reject and expel the Holy Spirit in his motions and operations. They bellow out reproaches against his servants, whom

he hath sent forth to feed and nourish their souls, Prov. xii. 1. The brutal creatures have a strong inclination to those things which tend to their health, and to the preservation and continuance of their life and strength; but sin makes men averse to their own happiness, and all the spiritual means which have a tendency thereunto. The beasts are afraid of that which is hurtful and destructive to their being: but sin pushes men on in the ways of death; and the paths which lead to eternal destruction. It is said, Job xi. 12. that 'man is born like a wise ass's colt.' He brings with him into the world a heart more wild, fierce, and untamed than any beast of the field.

6. Consider its vileness. There is nothing in the whole creation so detestable as sin. It is the abominable thing which the Lord hates. He cannot look upon it but with infinite abhorrence. There is nothing so base and so contemptible as sin. The scripture sets it forth under various notions, no single one being sufficient to express its vileness. It is called *flesh*, Gen. vi. 3. and Gal. v. 16, 17. This holds forth the vile degeneracy of man's soul since this corruption seized upon it. By creation it was pure and holy, heavenly and spiritual, near a-kin to the angels, yea, as like to the nature of God as a creature could be: but now it is transformed into flesh, made carnal, sensual, and devilish. It is vile both formally and effectively: filthy in itself, and hath made the whole man so. It is compared in scripture to those things which are most vile and detestable in the eyes of men, as filthy vomit, defiling mire, rotten members, putrifying sores, &c.

(7.) It excludes and debars from access to God and communion with him. There can be no friendship between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial, between an infinitely pure and holy God, and vile filthy polluted sinners. We have an important question proposed, Psal. xxiv. 3. 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place?' The answer is given, ver. 4. 'He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart: who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.' And we are told, Psal. v. 4, 5. 'Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.' The heart is the temple of God, the chief place of his residence in man; and he will never dwell in it, unless it be made clean. There is no access to God here or hereafter without holiness, James iv. 8. Rev. xxi. ult.

8. *Lastly*, It exposeth to terrible wrath. It was sin that brought the deluge upon the old world: and it hath brought many fearful

plagues and judgments upon the new one since. And it is this that lays men open to the wrath and vengeance of God in the life that is to come. Hence they are called 'children of wrath,' Eph. ii. 3. They are born to wrath by nature. This is their portion and inheritance. 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven (says the apostle) against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The curses and threatenings of the law proclaim the divine displeasure, and give warnings and intimations to sinners of what they are to expect. There is a day of wrath coming, and of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, when the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. We are exposed to wrath on account of sin, in our conception, birth, life, and death, and through all eternity.

In the above three things, the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of the whole nature, consists in original sin. These three things make up this monstrous body. There lies our sinfulness which we are brought into by the fall.

How this corruption is conveyed to all the children of men, the scripture, even the text, makes it plain, that it is conveyed by natural generation, so as all that proceed from Adam in the way of natural generation are infected with it. But if it be asked, how this original corruption is propagated from parents to children? how it comes to pass that our souls are defiled and tainted with original sin? Indeed the question is very hard and difficult. It may be this is one of those mysteries which are reserved for the world to come, about which we cannot in our present state solve every difficulty that may be moved. It is much more our duty and interest to be solicitous how to get sin out of our souls, than to pry and search into the way how it came into them. However, this is certain, that God doth not infuse it. Souls receive neither purity nor impurity from him, but only their naked essence, and the natural powers and properties flowing therefrom. He doth not infuse any impurity into men; for he cannot be the author of sin, who is the revenger of it. Nor doth he create men's souls in their original purity and rectitude; for the sin of Adam lost that, and God's justice withhold it from his posterity. As a pure and holy God, he cannot infuse any impurity into the souls of men; and as a just and righteous God, he may and doth withhold from, or create them void and destitute of, that holiness and righteousness which was once their happiness and glory. Again, it is probably thought by some, that original sin comes neither in by the soul alone, nor by the body alone, apart from the soul, but upon the union and con-

junction of both in one person. It is the union of these two that constitutes a child of Adam, and as such only we are capable of being infected with his sin.

Solid divines, without a daring intrusion into unrevealed secrets, proceed by the following steps in answering this question.

1. If it be demanded, How it comes to pass that an infant becomes guilty of Adam's sin? the answer is, Because he is a child of Adam by natural generation.

2. But why is he deprived of that original rectitude with which Adam was created? they answer, Because Adam lost it by his sin, and therefore could not transmit to his posterity what he had lost.

3. But how comes he to be inclined to that which is evil? the answer is, Because he wants that original rectitude, which Adam had when he was created. For whosoever wants original righteousness, inclines naturally to that which is evil. And so the propension of nature to that which is bad, seems to be by way of concomitancy with the want of original righteousness. No action can be holy which doth not flow from the image of God in the soul, as its root and principle. And therefore man being despoiled of this image of God, there is no action of any man in a state of nature but what is sinful and corrupt. But, as I said before, it much more concerns us how to get original corruption removed, than to inquire how it came in.

This corruption may well be called original sin, because we have it from our original, it being as old as ourselves; and because it is transmitted from Adam, the origin of mankind; and, which is the

Last thing, because all actual transgressions proceed from it, Matt. xv. 19.; as I have already shewn.

I shall shut up this point with a few inferences.

1. No wonder then that we are born to trouble as the sparks fly upward; that we are attacked and made prisoners as soon as we come into the world. This says that the straight way in the course of justice would be, that we go from the womb to the grave, and that the cradle be turned into a coffin. For, in a spiritual sense, we are all dead born; and no wonder that natural death should seize those that are spiritually dead; and that all sorts of miseries should pursue those that are destitute of every thing that is good.

2. There is no ground for parents to be lifted up on the account of children, however numerous and fair. For though they may have fair faces, they have foul and deformed souls by nature; and natural beauty is far outbalanced by spiritual ugliness. Parents had much need to carry them by faith and prayer to the fountain of Christ's blood, to get them washed and purified from their spiritual uncleanness.

3. This doctrine lets us see the absolute necessity of Christ as a Saviour, who alone is able to save us from the guilt of sin by his blood, and from the filth and pollution of it by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, and from the dominion of it by the power of divine grace. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,' John iii. 3.

4. *Lastly*, See the absolute necessity of mortification, of crucifying the flesh; for from it all actual sins proceed. A form of godliness will not do. No; we must strike at the root, otherwise the branches will never die. The consideration of the total corruption and depravation of our nature should make us all lie low in the dust before a holy God, watchful against every motion and temptation to sin, restless till we be delivered from it, and indefatigable in the course of the Christian warfare. And it calls every one to mourning and lamenting over the ruins of our nature, and to supplicating the God of all grace, that he may cleanse our polluted souls, and wash us from our sins in the blood of Jesus.

OF THE MISERY OF MAN'S NATURAL STATE.

ROM. v. 12.—*By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*

THESE words teach us a lesson that all the books of philosophers could never do. They were sensible of the depravity and misery of human nature; but how was it depraved, and what was the spring of all the troubles the life of man is exposed to, they were utterly ignorant. We all see a flood of misery let into the world; but what way the sluice was opened, we can only learn from divine revelation. And in this passage we have it, viz. *By one man sin entered into the world*, and misery followed it close at the heels. This one man was Adam, the natural root, and the federal head of all mankind, ver. 14. In the words we have,

1. A flood of misery passing over the world, *Death passed upon all men*. For understanding this, ye must compare it with Gen. ii. 17. 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' This awful threatening is marked to be accomplished here. *Death* there implies loss of communion with God, which was evident in the fulfilling of the threatening, Gen. iii. 24. when God drove out the man, viz. from paradise, and placed a heavenly guard to prevent man's access to the tree of life. It also implies a being under God's wrath